

# WORKING CONNECTIONS CHILD CARE

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## Introduction

Washington State now has subsidized child care for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients and low-income working parents. It's called Working Connections Child Care (WCCC).

**PLEASE NOTE:** Apply for child care at your local DSHS Community Services Office (CSO). At the DSHS CSO, you have the right to make a written application for child care and get a written decision on your application. The rules for child care eligibility are in the Washington Administrative Code at WAC 388-290.

## Which parents are eligible for help with child care?

- Caretakers of one or more children;
- Employed parents (including self-employed) who are not receiving TANF and who have income (both gross earned and unearned minus child support paid out pursuant to an order) below 200% of the federal poverty level. Families who have income greater than the amounts shown below are not eligible.

Family Size	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
200% FPL	\$2,082	\$2,612	\$3,142	\$3,672	\$4,202	\$4,732	\$5,262

- TANF recipients who are in DSHS approved work-related activities such as job search, vocational training, and work experience, or employment;
- TANF recipients or former recipients who are working at least 20 hours per week and:
  1. are in training or education programs for up to 36 months total, including up to 12 months while on TANF; or
  2. are participating in an employment retention activity; or
  3. are participating in a labor exchange activity.

NOTE: Students in education and training programs must make satisfactory progress in their programs to remain eligible for WCCC.

- A parent may be eligible even if the parent is not a legal immigrant, as long as the child is a citizen or legal resident.

Note: TANF recipients in sanction are not eligible for WCCC unless it is necessary to get or keep a job, participate in a WorkFirst activity or remove the sanction.

## **Which children are eligible for care under this program?**

- Children who are citizens or legally residing in the United States;
- Children who are under age thirteen;
- Children who are between ages of thirteen and nineteen if:  
a medical provider gives a statement that child is physically, mentally or emotionally incapable of self-care  
**or**  
child is under court supervision.

## **Who can provide child care under this program?**

- A child may receive care in an adult relative's home **or** the child may be cared for in the child's home by an adult friend, neighbor or relative; but only if the friend or in-home/relative provider registers with the department, meets minimum health and safety requirements; and passes a criminal background check;
- Licensed child care centers and family homes;
- Certified child care providers such as tribal child care facilities, child care facilities on a military installation or on public school property and run by a school district.

## **How does the program work?**

- Parent/caretaker applies at local DSHS office.
- If the application is approved, DSHS will give information on the types of care they will fund and how to locate providers and select care.
- Child care will be paid for the number of hours the parent or caretaker is working, looking for work, or doing WorkFirst activities, including transportation time from the child care provider to work or other activity and back.
- Whether or not you receive TANF benefits, if you are working 20 hours or more per week and you are participating in education or training, DSHS may authorize child-care for your time spent in education or training activities. This includes up to 10 hours per week of study time before or after classes or up to 3 hours per day when needed to cover time between approved classes.
- Child care may be authorized for employment retention activities if you are receiving TANF, or for up to one year after going off TANF and you are working 20 hours or more per week. Additionally, child care may be authorized for hours of participation in labor exchange activity if you are receiving TANF, or for up to two years after going off TANF and you are working 20 hours or more per week. As a former recipient, your earnings must be below 200% of the federal poverty level to qualify for WCCC.
- Parents then must locate a child care provider who is willing to accept their child at the DSHS payment rate, which is a lower amount than some providers charge.

## Must parents pay a share of daycare costs?

All parents/caregivers will be required to share in the cost of the child care provided under WCCC. The parents' share is called a co-payment.

The copayment is figured by adding the total amount of all gross earned and unearned income. This is your countable income, unless you pay out child support. If you pay child support, then countable income is the sum of total income minus the amount of child support paid out based on a state or tribal court order or Division of Child Support administrative order.

- ❖ if countable income is at or below 82% of Federal Poverty Level (Column 2 in the chart below) co-pay = \$15.
- ❖ if countable income is over 82% up to 137.5% of Federal Poverty Level (Column 3 in the chart below) co-pay = \$50.
- ❖ if countable income is over 137.5% of Federal Poverty Level (Column 5 in chart below) co-pay is figured by using formula set out below.

(For parents who have gotten full-time employment and are going to be off TANF, the continued TANF cash assistance paid under DSHS income budgeting rules for the two months after the income changes is not included in the co-payment calculation.)

### INCOME STANDARDS FOR SUBSIDIZED CHILD CARE

Family Size	Column 1 100% Federal Poverty Level for Family Size	Column 2 If your "total" income is between these amounts your co- pay is \$15	Column 3 If your "total" income is between these amounts your co- pay is \$50	Column 4 If your income is between these amounts your co- pay is \$50 or greater, depending on formula below	Column 5 <b>137.5% of Federal Poverty Level</b>
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**Total income is adjusted earned income plus unearned income.**

2	\$1,041	\$0 and 854	\$855 and 1,431	\$1,432 and 2,082	\$1,431
3	\$1,306	\$0 and 1,071	\$1,072 and 1,796	\$1,797 and 2,612	\$1,796
4	\$1,571	\$0 and 1,288	\$1,289 and 2,160	\$2,161 and 3,142	\$2,160
5	\$1,836	\$0 and 1,506	\$1,507 and 2,525	\$2,526 and 3,672	\$2,526
6	\$2,101	\$0 and 1,723	\$1,724 and 2,889	\$2,890 and 4,202	\$2,889
7	\$2,366	\$0 and 1,940	\$1,941 and 3,253	\$3,254 and 4,732	\$3,253
8	\$2,631	\$0 and 2,157	\$2,158 and 3,618	\$3,619 and 5,262	\$3,618

Formula: Families with income between the two amounts in column 4 subtract 137.50% FPL (column 5) from their countable income, multiply by .44 and then add \$50.00. Families whose income is greater than the high figure in column 4 are not eligible for subsidized child care.

**EXAMPLE 1**

A parent with three children earns gross income of \$500 per month receives a TANF grant of \$392.

Figure total income:	\$500	earned income
	<u>+ 392</u>	unearned income
	\$892	total income

Figure Co-payment: Family size is 4; go to row of chart with that family size. Total income is between \$0 and \$1288, so co-payment is \$15.

**EXAMPLE 2**

A person with two children earns gross income of \$1,800 per month. Parent owes \$300 per month in court-ordered child support.

\$1,800	earned income
<u>- 300</u>	minus child support
1,500	equals countable income

Figure copayment: Family size is 3; go to row of chart with that family size. Total income is between \$1,072 and \$1,796, so copayment is \$50.

**EXAMPLE 3**

Two parent family with one child. Mother has gross earnings of \$1,150 per month. Father receives \$760 in Social Security Disability benefit.

\$1,910	total earned and unearned income
<u>1,796</u>	minus 137.5% FPL for household of 3
114	
<u>x .44</u>	multiply by .44
50.16	
<u>+ 50.00</u>	add \$50.00
100.16	is the amount of copayment each month

**EVERY FAMILY WILL HAVE A CHILD CARE COPAY OF \$15 OR HIGHER DEPENDING ON THE FAMILY'S INCOME.**

- Your co-payment is paid directly to your child care provider.
- DSHS may terminate your child care funding if you do not pay your co-payment.

- These new co-payments started March 1, 2003 for new applicants and for current recipients.
- It is okay for any other person or agency to pay your co-payment, as long as it is paid directly to your child care provider.
- Child care providers cannot require payment above the co-payment amount to keep your child in care. Providers have agreed to accept the payment rate paid under WCCC for your child.
- Fees that are charged all children for registration, equipment, activities will be paid by DSHS.
- In Home/Relative Care - DSHS will issue payment to the parent/caregiver and then parent/caregiver must pay the provider. DSHS may set up a protective payee if you do not pay the provider to ensure payment to the provider.
- For all other care - DSHS issues its portion of payment directly to the child care provider.

### **How do I request a fair hearing?**

If you disagree with a DSHS decision, you may ask for a fair hearing. To ask for a fair hearing, fill out a Fair Hearing Request at your local welfare office or write to the Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 42488, Olympia, WA 98504. If it is an emergency, you may ask to have your hearing held as soon as possible by calling the Office of Administrative Hearings at (360) 664-8717 or 1-800-583-8271. This is called an “expedited” hearing. Please see our publication Representing Yourself at a Fair Hearing for more information.

You may keep getting the same benefits if you request a hearing within 10 days of the date on the notice or before the date the notice takes effect, except if your child care certification has run out. This is called “continued assistance.”

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