
Child Care During the Pandemic Frequently Asked Questions Updated June 1, 2022

Parents/Guardians

Access to Child Care

Q: If my jurisdiction has implemented stricter guidance than the state, can my child care program operate with the guidance given to the rest of the state (e.g. serve all parents, increase capacity, etc.)?

A: MSDE provides guidance based on MSDE/MDH guidance found here: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/covid-faqs>. However, child care programs must follow their local jurisdiction's restrictions if more stringent, including following guidance from their local health and education offices.

Q: How do I apply for the Child Care Scholarship program?

A: The Child Care Scholarship program provides financial assistance with child care costs to eligible working families in Maryland. Parents who earn up to 75% of State Median Income are eligible (e.g., a family of four can have an income of up to \$90,033 per year and qualify for a scholarship). To find out more about eligibility and how to apply for the [Child Care Scholarship program](#), see <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>.

Q: Can I use the Child Care Scholarship program for child care?

A: Yes. Only licensed child care programs participating in [Maryland EXCELS](https://marylandexcels.org/) (<https://marylandexcels.org/>) or registered informal care provider may accept vouchers from families in Child Care Scholarship program, and the program must be at Levels 3, 4 and 5 receive tiered reimbursements. To find out more about the [Child Care Scholarship program](#), see <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>.

Q: Where can I get assistance in finding child care?

A: Please go to [Locate: Child Care](#) (<https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/for-parents/locate-child-care>). Or, for free, personalized assistance, contact a LOCATE: Child Care referral specialist by calling 877-261-0060 Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 4 p.m. A referral specialist will help you to identify child care options based on your family's specific needs. [LOCATE: Child Care Special Needs Service](#) (<https://www.marylandfamilynetwork.org/for-parents/locate-child-care-special-needs>) is also available Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 800-261-0060 or learn more about

finding care for children with special needs here. *Para obtener referencias de proveedores licenciados por favor llame LOCATE: Child Care al 800-999-0120 o español@marylandfamilynetwork.org.*

Q: Can I use unlicensed family and friend care?

A: No. However, a family child care home is not required to be registered if the provider is (a) a relative of each child; or (b) a friend of each child's parent or legal guardian and the care is provided on a non-regular basis of less than 20 hours a month (COMAR 13A.15.02). Family and friend providers wishing to continue to provide child care services should contact their regional licensing office to become a licensed family child care provider. Information on licensing can be found here: <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/licensing>.

Q: What happens if I use a nanny to take care of my child in my own home?

A: MSDE does not regulate nannies or alternative providers, so we cannot advise on these matters.

Q: Can I use an unlicensed child care provider outside my home?

A: No. All child care providers in Maryland must be licensed. An unlicensed provider may be subject to civil and criminal penalties.

Additional Information

Q: Where can I find additional information?

A: Additional information can be found on our website <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org>. You may also e-mail us at earlychildhood.msde@maryland.gov or call us at 410-767-0100.