



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Child Care Frequently Asked Questions Updated September 1, 2020

Parents

Accessing Child Care

Q: Who can access child care?

A: Any parent may now access child care.

Q: Is there a cost for child care services?

A: Yes. Parents pay tuition for child care services.

Q: My child care program is closed. Can they apply to reopen?

A: Yes. Family and Center-based child care programs interested in reopening may contact their licensing specialist and complete a *Child Care Verification of Reopening* form.

Q: My child care provider keeps charging me for child care even though I am not attending (e.g., the program is closed; I am keeping my child safe at home; or I don't qualify by the Governor's Executive Orders).

A: We have received several inquiries from families regarding the continued financial responsibility to pay for child care if a facility has closed or if a parent has decided to temporarily discontinue child care services. The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on both families and child care providers. During this time of emergency, we must seek to work collaboratively and strive towards equitable outcomes. MSDE does not oversee child care contracts.

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 65% of State Median Income are eligible (e.g., a family of four can have an income of up to \$71,525 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 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. Unfortunately, MSDE does not have funding to expand the child care scholarship program for school age students, regardless of whether they are from income-eligible families. If your school-age children need child care during the school year, the child care scholarship can only be used for before and/or after school care. If you are planning for your school-age children to attend a child care program full-time, due to virtual learning or for any other reason, you will have to pay any balances owed to your child care program during the school hours. Only a 1 Unit or 2 Unit child care scholarship will be issued for school-age children during the school year. To find out more about the Child Care Scholarship program, see <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-scholarship-program>.

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 Nannies Providers?

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?

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 the plan for child care in Maryland during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A: Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Child Care can be found at <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org>.

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.