



Department of Planning & Community & Economic Development
Office of Community Services

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FACT SHEET
CITY OF MADISON CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

What Is The City of Madison Child Care Assistance Program?

The City of Madison Child Care Assistance Program pays childcare costs on a sliding fee scale for low-income families who qualify for funding. Program criteria are detailed below.

Who Is Eligible For City of Madison Child Care Assistance?

City of Madison Child Care Assistance is only for families who are ineligible for other childcare assistance programs such as the Wisconsin Shares Child Care Subsidy Program (W-2) administered by Dane County.

To be eligible, families must have resided a minimum of six months in the City of Madison and continue to reside within the City of Madison limits. They must also qualify based on the City's income guidelines. Families with income above the income guidelines pay a portion of their child care expenses. This portion is called a *family share*.

Parent/guardians must meet at least one of the following criteria to be considered eligible:

1. Be employed or looking for work; or
2. Be enrolled in school or a training program; or
3. Have special needs (e.g., family stress, child developmental issues, etc.).

What Is The Difference Between The City of Madison And The Dane County Program?

Families who are eligible for City of Madison funding may only use a City accredited child care program. This includes centers and family child care providers. Families eligible for County funding may use City accredited, State licensed or County certified programs (center based or family child care).

The City of Madison's income guidelines and child care rates differ from Dane County's.

How Are The City of Madison's Rates Determined?

The City of Madison's child care rates are based on the average rates charged by City accredited centers and family child care providers. The Office of Community Services conducts a required

survey annually. The Child Care Assistance Program will notify centers and family child care providers of rate changes.

City accredited centers and family child care providers must establish a fee schedule for childcare services. If the center or provider's rate is above the City's maximum rates, the family will be responsible to pay the difference between the City and the center or provider's rates. Centers and providers that charge rates that are lower than the City's maximum rates will be paid at the lower rate.

Centers and family child care providers are required to charge the same rate to City funded families as non-City funded families. In the case where there is a sliding fee scale offered to the public, the City will pay the scale's highest rate up to the City's maximum rate.

Payment Of Vacation And Other Benefits

The City will be guided by the terms of the written, signed center-parent or family child care provider-parent agreement and policies regarding such issues as payment of vacations, sick leave benefits, and holding fees. The City will pay no more than two weeks notice of change or discontinuance. The City will pay no more than its maximum rates for basic child care. The City can pay only one child care center or family child care provider at a time. If alternate care is required for the family, the City will pay one childcare program for the same time period.

What Documents Should The Center or Family Child Care Provider Receive?

A Child Care Assistance Authorization form giving formal notice of payment will be issued to eligible families. The center or family child care provider will receive a copy of the form. This authorization form includes: name of the child, number of days eligible for care, City's payment rate, parent's *family share**, termination dates, and comments.

Any increase or decrease in fees or the amount of care will require an updated authorization form.

*A *family share* is the portion of the cost of care that the family must pay directly to the center or family child care provider. A client has a *family share* when their income is above the City income guidelines. The City of Madison will pay the balance up to the City's maximum rate. It is to the center or provider's benefit to charge the *family share* ahead of time in order to apply *family adjustments* (see section below on *family adjustments*).

What Is A Family Adjustment?

A *family adjustment* (abbreviated on invoice as FA) is a temporary reduction to the *family share*. In order to qualify for a *family adjustment*, a client with a *family share* must submit to the Child Care Assistance Coordinator verification of personally paid medical or dental expenses, not covered by insurance.

The invoice will reflect additional payment for verifiable medical or dental expenses. This additional payment is called a *family adjustment*. Note: *family adjustments* will not be reflected on the child care assistance authorization.

The center or family child care provider must credit the *family adjustment* payment to the family in the form of a temporarily lower *family share*.

How Will The Center or Family Child Care Provider Be Paid?

There are 13 billing statements in a calendar year. The Child Care Assistance Program will mail a billing statement for centers and family child care providers every four weeks (not on a monthly basis). A file copy will be included for the center or provider's use.

The center or family child care provider should review the invoice for accuracy, make adjustments if necessary (e.g., incorrect rate or addition of non-school days, etc.), sign and return the statement for payment. The Child Care Assistance Coordinator will review the returned statement for adjustments, and forward the statement to the City of Madison Comptroller's Office, which will issue the check directly to the center or family child care provider.

In the first billing period, childcare programs will be paid for the actual number of days of care provided to new families. Subsequent billing periods will pay for four weeks of care for continuing families.

When Can The Center or Family Child Care Provider Expect Payment?

The center or family child care provider can expect payment about two weeks after the ending date of the invoice. The directions at the bottom of the invoice inform the center or provider of the scheduled payment date. If the center or provider is late in returning the invoice, the City of Madison Comptroller's Office will make payment, as it is able.

Centers and family child care providers may arrange for direct deposit. It is possible to arrange to pick up the check. Please write this request across the top of the invoice. The City of Madison Comptroller's Office will hold the check and notify the center or provider directly when the check is ready.

What Is The Family's Responsibilities?

1. Families must maintain residency within the City of Madison limits.
2. Families must be ineligible to receive assistance from all other childcare assistance programs.
3. Families must be enrolled in a City accredited program.
4. Each family is required to submit income verification when requested by the Child Care Assistance Program. Continuing income eligibility is reviewed for every family on a semi-annual basis.
5. Families must notify the Child Care Assistance Coordinator of any change in address, income, occupation, marital status or adult residents in the household. Student families must notify the Child Care Assistance Coordinator of any changes in class schedule.

6. Families with a *family share* must pay that share directly to the center or family child care provider. Families are responsible to pay to the center or provider any rate differences between the City's maximum rate and the center or provider's actual rate.
7. Families must have a signed agreement with the program at the time care begins.
8. Families must give the center or family child care provider two weeks notice when discontinuing care.

What Are The Center's or Family Child Care Provider's Responsibilities?

1. In order to receive City of Madison childcare assistance, the center or family child care provider must maintain City of Madison accreditation.
2. The center or family child care provider must complete and sign an agreement with the parent regarding the terms of the childcare being provided. A signed copy should be on file.
3. The center or family child care provider must report the following to the Child Care Assistance Program:
 - Acceptance of a City funded client for childcare.
 - Beginning date of care.
 - Rate being charged.
 - Attendance issues or failure to use care for three consecutive days.
 - Changes affecting child care assistance (e.g., decreased or increased hours of care, transfer to another child care program, etc.)
 - Care not provided (e.g., program vacation days, substitute care by another City accredited program, etc.).
4. The center or family child care provider must submit accurate invoices.
5. The center or family child care provider must complete and return the City of Madison's annual survey.

The City of Madison appreciates the facilitative and supportive role that childcare programs have given to the City and its families. The childcare program's advocacy has been instrumental in working through some difficult situations.

What Are The City of Madison's Responsibilities?

1. The Child Care Assistance Coordinator determines a family's eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program.
2. The Child Care Assistance Program refers families to City accredited centers and the Family Child Care System (Satellite Family Child Care).

3. The Child Care Assistance Program monitors continuing eligibility (e.g., income reviews, revised school schedules, etc.)
4. The Child Care Assistance Program makes regular child care payments to the center or provider.
5. The Child Care Assistance Program gives two weeks notice concerning child care discontinuance or rate changes. (Eligibility for other child care funding may affect this.)
6. The City of Madison Child Care Program, including Satellite Family Child Care, offers support to centers and family child care providers.

What Are The Family Child Care System's Responsibilities? (Applicable only to FCC.)

1. Satellite Family Child Care refers City funded families to City of Madison accredited family child care providers.
2. Satellite Family Child Care ensures that family child care providers are meeting and maintaining City of Madison Accreditation Standards.
3. It is Satellite Family Child Care's responsibility to mediate childcare concerns and issues with parents and family child care providers.

Where Does The Center or Family Child Care Provider Go With Concerns?

When issues concern financial payment and other questions regarding the City of Madison Child Care Assistance Program, centers and family child care providers should contact the Child Care Assistance Coordinator at (608) 267-4996.

Centers who have child care concerns should contact their assigned Child Care Specialist at the Office of Community Services - Child Care Program for support, assistance and problem solving at (608) 266-6520.

Family child care providers should contact their assigned Family Child Care Consultant at Satellite Family Child Care for the same at (608) 270-3438.

The Satellite Family Child Care staff should contact the assigned Child Care Specialist at the Office of Community Services for problem-solving and additional support services if needed.

We want to work in a positive, cooperative way to maintain a quality childcare service for families. Please feel free to call or e-mail with questions.

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Revision May 2008

