

How Can I Get Help Paying for Childcare in Ohio?

If you want to work, but have children, you may worry that you will not be able to afford childcare. Ohio has some programs to help pay for childcare, as well as preschool. If your child has a disability, you may have additional options.

Is there a program to help me pay for childcare?

Ohio has the Publicly Funded Childcare (PFCC) program to help eligible people pay for childcare. People also call this help “childcare vouchers.” This is a program that can pay for some or all childcare costs for children under 13, or children under 18 if they have a disability. You may have a copayment depending on your income and your family size. PFCC will only pay for services from an approved/ licensed childcare provider.

Who is eligible for PFCC?

- Parents or caregivers who are working, attending school or in another approved work activity (including OWF and SNAP work activities).
- The child must be a US citizen or eligible non-citizen.
- At application, your family’s gross (before taxes) income must be below the eligibility limit for your family size: 142% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) or 150% if the child has special needs. Once you are approved, your family’s income can go up to 300% FPL and maintain eligibility. The FPL changes each year and depends on the size of your family.
- You may also be eligible if you are homeless or required by Children’s Services to have protective childcare.

How do I apply?

You apply for PFCC through your local Department of Job and Family Services (JFS). You must fill out a paper application or apply online at <https://benefits.ohio.gov/>. If you fill out a paper application, you can fax, mail, or hand deliver it to your local JFS office. JFS will ask you to verify your employment and your income. They have 30 days to process your application. You must select a childcare provider before JFS can approve your application. JFS will pay for your childcare while they are processing your application if your child is in an approved center or home provider.

I don't know how to find childcare.

In Southwest Ohio, you can get help from 4C for Children, <https://www.4cforchildren.org/>. The Ohio Department of Education and JFS have an online childcare search tool at <http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov/>. You can also call Childcare Aware of America at 800-424-2246 for resources in your area.

Are there other resources for childcare and education for young children in Ohio?

Yes. Ohio has additional programs to help young children learn, depending on where you live. Some parts of Ohio have a program called “Preschool Promise,” The best way to see if this is available in your area is to search online for “preschool promise” and the name of your county. Your child may also be able to receive school readiness services through Head Start Ohio. You can learn more about Head Start and search for a provider at <https://ohsai.org/>.

What if I need childcare for a child with a disability?

If your child has special needs, you can indicate that on your application for Publicly Funded Childcare (PFCC). Many childcare providers are ready to enroll children with disabilities or special needs. You must talk to them about the services your child needs. They may qualify for enhanced payments depending on your child's needs. They may qualify for enhanced payments depending on your child's needs.

You can have your child evaluated to see if they qualify for services to help them with their disability, and the evaluation will be free. If your child is 0-3, you can get more information by calling 1-800-755-GROW. If your child is school-aged, even if they are not attending school yet, you should contact your local school district and ask that your child be evaluated for special education.

**If you have questions or need legal assistance,
please call the Legal Aid line at (513) 241-9400.**