Child Care Assistance
Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility and Application

Q: Who is eligible for Child Care Assistance (CCA)?
You may be eligible if your income is within the program limits and you meet one or more of the following criteria:

- You work at least 80 hours per month.
- You are a college or technical school student attending at least 80 hours per month.
- You are attending a college, university or technical institute a minimum of 12 semester credit hours.
- You are a high school or GED student.
- You work and attend school at least 80 hours per month.
- You receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and are participating in an approved work activity.

Additional eligibility information:

- For two-parent households, both parents must meet the work or work/school requirements.
- You must need child care for at least 30 days.
- CCA is not available if you are pursuing education beyond a bachelor's degree.

If you are a Foster Parent, please refer to the Foster Parent section below for questions specific to this care type.

Q: Who can apply for CCA?
A child's parent, guardian or a person who is exercising parental control of the child can apply for assistance.

Q: How do I apply for CCA?
Families desiring assistance with child care costs must submit a CCA application. An application may be submitted:

- Online via the SD BEES Customer Portal https://eaportal.sd.gov/
- By Mail
- In person at any local DSS office
- By Fax

Application requirements:

- All sections of the application must be completed, and all required verifications must be submitted for the application to be processed.
- Applications must be signed. Unsigned applications will be returned and will not be considered complete until signed.

Q: What is the BEES Customer Portal?
The SD BEES Customer Portal allows you to create a personalized, secure account. Through your account, you can apply for CCA, medical programs, and/or SNAP. The online application will guide you step-by-step based on your answers.

The BEES Customer Portal also allows you to download a paper application, report changes, upload required verifications and view your notices.

Q: How much assistance will I receive?
The amount you receive is based on family size and gross income. Depending on your family income, you may be responsible for a co-payment. The total co-payment will remain the same no matter how many children you have in care, the number of hours they are in care, or what your provider charges.

Q: How much CCA will my child receive?
The amount of care covered is based on your work and school schedule and your child care need. Each child is approved for a weekly level of service (LOS), which will not exceed the maximum the family is eligible for. The weekly levels of service are:

- Full Time: 28 or more hours per week
- Part Time: 16 – 27 hours per week
- Limited Time: 15 or less hours per week

You must pay any costs not covered by CCA.

Q: When will my assistance start?
CCA is approved for at least a 13-month certification period. Your certification period begins on the first day of the application month. CCA benefits begin when the need for care begins, the applicant meets eligibility requirements, and the provider is approved to receive payments. CCA applications will be processed within 30 days.

Q: What is the difference between School Care vs. Summer Care?
CCA is not available during the typical school day for school-age children. The weekly level of service depends on when care is needed and whether it is the school year or summer. When you apply for a school-age child, you choose when you need care:

- Before School
- After School
- Before and After School
- During School Year Only
- During Summer Only
- During School Year and Summer

During the summer, school-age children can receive care based on your work or school schedule and child care need.

Q: What if I have a child with special needs?
CCA can provide a higher reimbursement rate to child care providers caring for children with special needs (up to age 19) who require special accommodation. You must report the need for special accommodations on your CCA application. Documentation from a professional, such as a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, psychologist, psychiatric social worker, special educator, physical therapist or occupational therapist, is required to attest to the child's requirement for special accommodations. Your child care provider must also submit information about the type of special accommodations needed. The higher rate cannot be authorized until this information is received. Children under court supervision can also qualify for the higher reimbursement rate. A copy of a court order requiring child care must be provided with your application.

Q: How do I report participating in a TANF activity?
Report your TANF benefit and TANF activity hours on the CCA application. If you stop participating in a TANF activity, this is a permanent change and must be reported to CCA as a change of circumstance. You may report changes using the BEES Customer Portal, fax, mail, or in person at your local DSS office.

Q: What type of changes do I need to report and how do I report changes?
All permanent changes must be reported. Permanent changes include, but are not limited to:

- Termination of employment or voluntary resignation of employment
- Employment ending due to the closure of a business
- Graduation from an educational or training program
- No longer participating in a TANF approved activity
- Household member change, such as a child or spouse leaving the household
- Moving to a different town or state
- Changing your child care provider

You can report changes using the BEES Customer Portal, fax, mail, or in person at your local DSS office.

Temporary changes do not need to be reported. Temporary changes include but are not limited to: absences form work or school due to maternity or medical leave, fluctuations in hours due to seasonal work, a reduction of hours in your regular employment, or temporary breaks in attendance at an educational program due to semester or summer breaks.

CCA Renewal

Q: How often do I need to renew?
CCA is renewed every 13 months. You will receive a Renewal of Benefits notice and a Renewal Form about 6 weeks prior to the end of your certification period. Your CCA will automatically close if the Renewal Form is not returned or you are found ineligible during the renewal review.

Provider and Payment Information

Q: What child care providers can I use?
Several types of providers are allowed under the CCA program. To receive reimbursement, child care providers must be licensed, registered, or in-process of becoming licensed or registered with the DSS Office of Licensing and Accreditation (OLA). Some providers may be exempt from certain licensing requirements, such as In-Home, Informal and Relative (IIR) providers, or your provider may be licensed in another state.

Provider Types:

- Regulated – A provider who is registered or licensed by OLA. These include family day cares, and licensed child care programs.
- Relative – A family member (uncle, aunt, grandparent, great grandparent, or non-resident sibling to the child who is at least 18 years of age) who cares for your child. Proof of relationship is required.
- In-Home – A provider who comes to your home to care for only your children and is at least 18 years of age.
- Informal Care – A provider who cares for only your children and is at least 18 years of age.

In-Home and Informal Provider Requirements:

- Completion of the provider forms
- CPR certification including hands on testing
- Orientation training
- Background screening results received by OLA
- Completion of a home inspection

OLA will communicate with in-home and informal providers to complete requirements.

Relative Providers:

- You must work with your relative provider to complete additional verifications and forms.

Child care providers cannot be reimbursed until all requirements are met.

Q: May I use more than one provider?
Yes, you may use two (2) providers per child. Only one provider may receive payment for full time care and providers must meet all CCA requirements to receive payment. You must tell CCA how many hours your child will spend with each provider each week on your application.

Q: How does CCA pay my child care bill?
CCA pays your child care provider directly. Providers may submit weekly rosters to request payment based on your child's enrollment for the service week and the weekly rate structure. The service week runs Sunday through Saturday.

Cooperating with the Division of Child Support (DCS)

Q: Why does CCA require cooperation with DCS?
You are required to enroll and cooperate with DCS to ensure all resources available to the family are fully utilized. Exceptions can be made if cooperating with the DCS is not in the best interest of the child or family. Documentation will be required.

Definition of Homeless

Q: How does the McKinney-Vento Act define homeless?
The term homeless means an individual who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and includes individuals who:

- Share the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals or awaiting foster care placement.
- Have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodations for human beings.
- Live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings.
- Are migratory and live in any of the circumstances as described above.

Foster Parents (unless specified below, general FAQs apply)

Q: What requirements must be met to receive child care assistance?
Child Care Assistance is available for foster parents who need child care while they work and/or attend school.

Q: What child care providers can I use?
Several different types of provider types are allowed under the CCA program for foster parents including:

- Regulated – A provider who is registered or licensed by the (OLA). These include family day cares, and licensed child care programs.
- In-Home – A provider who comes to your home to care for only your children and is at least 18 years of age.
- Informal Care – A provider who cares for only your children and is at least 18 years of age.

If your provider is an in-home or informal provider, they must be pre-approved by Child Protection Services (CPS). Please contact the CPS Specialist prior to planning for in-home or informal care**.** If your child's CPS Specialist approves your in-home or informal provider, they must meet various requirements in order for payment to begin.

In-Home and Informal Provider Requirements:

- Completion of the provider forms
- CPR certification including hands on testing
- Orientation training
- Background screening results received by OLA
- Completion of a home inspection

OLA will communicate with in-home and informal providers to complete requirements.

Child care providers cannot be reimbursed until all requirements are met.

More Information

For more information, please visit the links below:

Eligibility Requirements: https://dss.sd.gov/childcare/childcareassistance/

Search for a Child Care Provider: https://apps.sd.gov/ss45provinfo/search.aspx

Search for your Local Office: https://dss.sd.gov/findyourlocaloffice/

Customer Portal: https://eaportal.sd.gov/