

DC Child Care Subsidy Program – Waitlist Policy

The DC Child Care Subsidy Program helps DC families pay for the cost of child care. The program supports families with low and moderate incomes or other special circumstances that create a need for child care assistance to access high-quality education and care in the District.

The DC Child Care Subsidy Program is funded through DC local funds, as well as federal funds from the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), including the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, as appropriate.

In the event that funding is insufficient to serve all families who are eligible for the DC Child Care Subsidy Program, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) has the authority to put into effect a waitlist for services. OSSE may implement a waitlist at any point in the fiscal year.

If it is necessary to implement a waitlist, OSSE will notify all child care providers participating in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program via email and post a notice on the OSSE website. The establishment of a waitlist will not impact children currently receiving child care subsidies but will prevent some new applicants from entering the program until sufficient funding is available.

Priority for Service

OSSE is establishing six priority groups for subsidized child care services based on eligibility classifications listed in the [DC Child Care Subsidy Program Policy Manual](#). Once OSSE initiates a waitlist, OSSE will provide notice of which priority groups will be eligible for subsidized child care services and which priority groups will be waitlisted, based on available funding. OSSE may further limit enrollment among priority groups if necessary or expand enrollment as funding allows.

PRIORITY 1

- 2.4.2.1 Children under protective services
- 2.4.2.2 Children with disabilities
- 2.4.2.4 Children experiencing homelessness

PRIORITY 2

- 2.4.1.4 TANF recipient or TANF payee
- 2.4.1.5 Participant in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T)
- 2.4.2.3 Children of adults with disabilities

PRIORITY 3

- 2.4.2.5 Children of teen parents
- 2.4.2.6 Children of elder caregivers
- 2.4.2.7 Children enrolled in Head Start, Early Head Start or Quality Improvement Network (QIN)

DRAFT – AUG. 11, 2025
FOR DISCUSSION – NOT IN EFFECT

- 2.4.2.8 Children in families experiencing domestic/family violence
- 2.4.2.9 Children with a parent(s) or guardian(s) participating in addiction recovery programs

PRIORITY 4

- 2.4.1.1 Working parent(s) or guardian(s) with income below 150 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL)
- 2.4.1.2 Job training or education program
- 2.4.1.3 Job search

PRIORITY 5

- 2.4.1.1 Working parent(s) or guardian(s) with income at or above 150 percent of FPL and below 250 percent of FPL

PRIORITY 6

- 2.4.1.1 Working parent(s) or guardian(s) with income at or above 250 percent of FPL and below 300 percent of FPL

Application Process and Eligibility Determination for New Families

When a waitlist is established, new families may apply for the DC Child Care Subsidy Program at a Department of Human Services (DHS) service center or online. Level II providers will not determine eligibility for new applicants while a waitlist remains in effect but may continue to conduct eligibility redeterminations for currently enrolled children. Additional information about eligibility requirements and eligibility determination can be located in the [DC Child Care Subsidy Program Policy Manual](#). Eligibility workers will follow the standard procedures for determining eligibility based on Program Eligibility Requirements (Section 2 of the DC Child Care Subsidy Policy Manual).

Eligibility workers will provide notice of denial to applicants who do not satisfy all eligibility requirements, fail to provide all required documentation, or provide information that is found to be false.

Applicants found eligible under an open priority level will be notified of their approved application and DHS staff will send an Admission Form to the family and selected child care provider under existing procedures. DHS may place children with Level II providers, but Level II providers will not hold the children's case files.

Applicants found eligible under priority levels that are currently waitlisted will be notified of their approved application and their placement on the waitlist.

Waitlist Procedures

Families will be assigned to the waitlist based on their priority level and the date of their eligibility determination.

DRAFT – AUG. 11, 2025
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As funding allows, families will be notified by their eligibility worker of the opportunity to receive subsidized child care. Children with the same level of prioritization will be notified in chronological order based on the date of their eligibility determination.

Once notified, families will have 10 business days to confirm eligibility and accept the subsidy. Families will be asked to confirm that they have not had any change in residence or income that would make them ineligible. Eligibility workers will assist families with selecting a child care provider, if needed, and send the Admission Form to the family and selected child care provider under standard procedures. If necessary, families may update their service needs from their initial application. The child's redetermination date shall be set no sooner than 12 months from the date the Admission Form is issued.

If a family does not accept the subsidy or does not respond to the notice within 10 business days, the next family on the waitlist will be contacted.

Families that decline a subsidy or fail to respond to the notice of subsidy availability and had their initial eligibility determination less than 12 months prior will be moved to the end of the waitlist. Families that decline a subsidy or fail to respond to the notice of subsidy availability and had their initial eligibility determination at least 12 months prior will be terminated from the waitlist. An applicant may reapply for a subsidy and will be added to the waitlist, if applicable, based on the new eligibility determination date.

Reporting Changes

Waitlisted families are required to report to their eligibility worker the following changes within 10 calendar days of the change:

- any changes in telephone number, email address, or mailing address, including a change in residency outside of DC;
- any changes in guardianship of the child(ren);
- an increase in income such that the family's income exceeds 85 percent of the state median income (SMI) for a family of the same size for more than 90 calendar days; and
- termination of a parent(s) or guardian(s)'s participation in work, training, or education that exceeds 90 calendar days and is not included in the definition of "temporary change" found at 6.3.1 of the DC Child Care Subsidy Program Policy Manual.

Any changes that result in the child no longer being eligible for a subsidy will result in the child being terminated from the waitlist. An applicant may reapply for a subsidy and will be added to the waitlist, if applicable, based on the new eligibility determination date.

Waitlisted families are permitted to report changes in circumstances that may qualify them for eligibility under a higher priority group identified above.

Communicating with Waitlisted Families

Eligibility workers may contact families to confirm contact information and interest in remaining on the waitlist and self-attestation of District residency and family income under 85 percent of SMI. If a family attests that they are no longer a District resident or has had family income above 85 percent of SMI for more than 90 calendar days, the child will be terminated from the waitlist.

Additional Policies for Families and Providers Currently Participating in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program

While the waitlist is in place, the following policies shall be in effect:

- Families currently receiving child care subsidies will continue to receive subsidies as long as they remain eligible and complete the eligibility redetermination process under standard procedures regardless of waitlist prioritization.
- Families currently receiving child care subsidies may add children to their case by providing proof of the relationship (i.e., birth or adoption of a new child) under standard procedures.
- Families that fail to complete a redetermination in the timelines specified by OSSE will be terminated from the program. Families may reapply to the DC Child Care Subsidy Program but may be placed on the waitlist, subject to their priority level.
- Level II providers will conduct redeterminations for currently enrolled families only and may add siblings of currently enrolled families to their family unit. Level II providers may not conduct eligibility determinations for any new applicants.
- OSSE will not issue new DC Child Care Subsidy provider agreements or Level II provider addendums while the waitlist is in effect or until further notice is provided by OSSE. Level I providers interested in becoming a Level II provider may join the provider waitlist by notifying their Education Services Monitor. Licensed child care providers interested in participating in the DC Child Care Subsidy Program should contact OSSE.Subsidy@dc.gov to be added to the provider waitlist.