



OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

DC Child Care Subsidy Program

How to Become a Subsidized Child Care Provider

The DC Child Care Subsidy Program, administered by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE), 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 by paying all or part of the cost of child care directly to the child care provider. Families can use child care subsidies to pay for care at a licensed child development facility that accepts subsidies.

To accept subsidies, a child care provider must complete the process designated by OSSE to become a subsidized child care provider. This policy provides guidance for child care providers seeking to become a Level I or Level II subsidized child care provider.

- Level I: A child care provider that has a current valid Child Care Subsidy Provider Agreement and can provide subsidized child care services.
- Level II: A child development center that has a current valid Child Care Subsidy Provider Agreement, can provide subsidized child care services, and is authorized to conduct initial eligibility determinations and redeterminations for families seeking child care subsidy.

This guidance outlines the eligibility criteria, application process, and required trainings for Level I and Level II providers.

Level I Provider Eligibility Requirements

Child care providers that operate a child development facility or facilities licensed by OSSE are eligible to become a Level I subsidized child care provider.

Level I Provider Application Process

To become a Level I subsidized child care provider, a provider must complete the application process below.

1. **View the orientation video:** Watch the entire [orientation video \(Español\)](#);
2. **Complete the orientation quiz:** Take the [brief quiz \(Español\)](#). A score of 80 percent or higher is required to pass.

3. **Submit proof of passing quiz score:** Save or print the first page of the quiz, including your final score, as proof of completion. Email the first page of the quiz with a passing score to OSSE.Subsidy@dc.gov. Include the subject line: **Passing Subsidy Quiz: <Insert Facility Name>**
4. **Submit application and supporting documents:** After proof of a passing quiz score is received and reviewed, OSSE will provide the application, a list of required documents, and an instruction guide. Complete and submit the application via the secure web portal provided by OSSE.
5. **Respond to any feedback from OSSE:** After OSSE reviews the initial application, respond to and return any outstanding required documents until your application is approved.
6. **Meet with a subsidy team member:** An education services monitor (ESM) will contact you to review the Child Care Subsidy Provider Agreement and discuss next steps.
7. **Sign the agreement:** OSSE will send an electronic agreement for you to sign. The Deputy Superintendent of Early Learning must also sign the agreement. The final signed copy with both signatures will be emailed to you for your records.
8. **Onboard as a Level I subsidized child care provider:** Your assigned ESM will send you a welcome letter and subsidy resources. Each facility listed on the agreement will become active in the subsidy eligibility and assignment system.

This process may take up to eight weeks to sign the provider agreement. This time frame primarily depends on how quickly you submit all required documents.

Level I Provider Expectations

Level I subsidized child care providers must comply with the requirements established in the Child Care Subsidy Provider Agreement (“the agreement”) to become and remain a subsidized child care provider. Some of the agreement requirements include:

- Provide child care services to eligible families in accordance with the agreement;
- Use funds received to support the cost of providing subsidized child care services;
- Maintain daily attendance records;
- Participate in Capital Quality, the District of Columbia’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS);
- Maintain a copy of all attendance reports, co-payment records, documents, and records to support a child’s participation in the subsidized child care program, and any other documents required for participation in the subsidy program for a period of no less than 5 years; and
- Cooperate with in-person or virtual monitoring visits and audits to verify recordkeeping, attendance, placement, and services provided to the eligible child(ren).

Level I Provider Trainings

Required Trainings

Level I providers are required to participate in the following trainings each agreement period:

- Attendance and Error Report Training; and
- OSSE Attendance Tracking System (OATS) Training.

Optional Trainings

Level I providers that have been enrolled in the subsidy program for at least one year can participate in the Eligibility Institute to become a Level II provider.

Level II Provider Eligibility Requirements

Level I subsidized child care providers interested in determining eligibility for families applying to the DC Child Care Subsidy Program may become Level II providers if they:

- Have been a Level I provider for at least one year;
- Operate a child development center;
 - Child development homes and expanded homes are not eligible to become Level II providers and determine eligibility.
- Comply with all OSSE policies and procedures according to the Child Care Subsidy Provider Agreement;
- Have no more than two late submissions of monthly attendance reports in the previous fiscal year and provide accurate information on attendance reports each month.
- Have no more than four subsidy payment error report submissions that include payment errors caused by provider error in the previous fiscal year.
- Have at least two staff members available to support eligibility determination per facility.

Level II Provider Application Process

To become a Level II subsidized child care provider, a provider must complete the steps below.

1. **Register for the Eligibility Institute training:** This is a two-day training offered quarterly at OSSE headquarters. The training provides an in-depth look at the policies and procedures for determining eligibility for the DC Child Care Subsidy Program.
2. **Await confirmation for the training:** The subsidy team will determine if you meet the Level II provider eligibility requirements.
3. **Receive a confirmation email to attend the training:** OSSE will approve or deny the Eligibility Institute registration request.
4. **Attend the training:** You must attend both days of the Eligibility Institute, to receive an invitation to register for the DC Child Care Eligibility Proficiency Exam.
5. **Register and take the exam:** You must pass the DC Child Care Eligibility Proficiency Exam with a minimum score of 80 percent or more. The exam is timed and is only administered in-person at OSSE headquarters.
6. **Sign the acknowledgement letter:** Providers with staff who pass the Eligibility Proficiency Exam will be emailed a Level II acknowledgement letter. The letter must be signed by the authorized representative and emailed back to OSSE.
7. **Sign the new agreement and addendum:** Once the acknowledgement letter is signed and returned, OSSE will send a new electronic subsidy agreement for you to sign with the Level II Provider Addendum.
8. **Complete all required training:** Eligibility staff must complete the [required Level II trainings](#) before determining eligibility. Eligibility staff include staff at a Level II provider

who passed the Eligibility Proficiency Exam.

Level II Provider Expectations

In addition to Level I requirements, Level II subsidized child care providers must comply with the requirements established in the Level II Provider Addendum. Addendum requirements include:

- Determine the parent(s) or guardian(s) co-payment;
- Be accountable for any and all missing records or documentation supporting a child's participation in subsidized child care;
- Report all payment errors within 90 days to OSSE and repay all over payments to the District;
- Comply with the following requirements regarding any staff conducting eligibility determinations:
 - All existing staff conducting eligibility determinations shall attend the required training(s) each agreement period;
 - Any new eligibility staff, must be participate in the Eligibility Institute and become certified by OSSE before conducting any eligibility determinations;
 - Notify the assigned eligibility monitor within 48 hours of any changes in staff conducting eligibility determinations; and
 - Participate in annual eligibility monitoring to assess compliance with conducting eligibility determinations and redeterminations for families and children receiving subsidized child care.

One Year Probation Period

Level II providers are put on probationary status for their first year conducting eligibility and redeterminations. During this time, they will be monitored based on the following criteria:

- Following the provider's first eligibility determination made at the facility the assigned eligibility monitor must review and approve the provider's eligibility records and data entries.
- During the first annual eligibility assessment, no more than 10 percent of the total case file errors can be contributed to ineligible children.

Level II Provider Trainings

Required Trainings

Level II providers are required to participate in the following trainings at least once each agreement year:

- Eligibility Policies Refresher Training;
- Subsidy, Eligibility and Assignment (SEA) Training;
- Attendance and Error Report Training; and
- Annual Eligibility Assessment Review Training.

Optional Trainings

Level II providers may participate in the following optional trainings:

- Brown Bag Trainings; and
- Mini OATS Training.

Questions?

For questions on becoming a Level I or Level II subsidized child care provider or for general questions about the DC Child Care Subsidy Program, please email OSSE.Subsidy@dc.gov.

