



Child Care Resources for Kinship Caregivers

I am a relative or kinship caregiver taking care of a child. Can I get help paying for child care?

The Administration for Children's Services (ACS) provides help paying for child care to eligible families in ACS-funded child care centers and family child care networks. Children age 6 weeks to 13 years as well as children with special needs up to age 18 may qualify for assistance. Eligibility is based on household income, the reason that the child needs child care, the child's immigration status, and the child's specific needs. The child must be a legal resident of the U.S. and must live within the five boroughs of New York City (a child living outside of New York City but under the supervision of ACS is also eligible). The immigration status of the caregiver does not matter. Resources and assets of the household are not looked at to determine eligibility.

You may qualify for help paying for child care if you are working or are actively seeking employment, are in an approved training or education program, or are on public assistance and need child care to meet work requirements. If you are receiving cash assistance (TANF), you are automatically eligible. If not, there may be a waiting list. The amount of help you receive is determined based on your income.

How can I find a child care provider?

There are five New York City resource and referral agencies that keep a list of regulated, licensed, center-based child care programs which can help you find child care at no cost¹:

- Child Care, Inc. - (212) 929-7604
- Day Care Council of New York, Inc. - (212) 206-7818
- Committee for Hispanic Children and Families, Inc. - (212) 206-1090
- Chinese American Planning Council - (212) 941-0030
- Child Development Support Corporation - (718) 398-6370

Are there other ways to receive assistance?

A voucher is another option for eligible families. Vouchers allow families to use child care providers that are not ACS-funded. There is very limited funding for vouchers and there may be a long waiting time before you receive one. Currently, vouchers are only available to individuals receiving public assistance and who are in work activities or receiving transitional benefits, or those who have finished receiving transitional benefits but continue to need help paying for child care.

What if I am working toward getting off of public assistance?

Transitional child care helps pay for the cost of child care for families leaving public assistance for up to 12 months after the household's public assistance case has closed.

What if I don't receive public assistance, but the child does?

Any child receiving public assistance qualifies for child care help. This is true even if you are not receiving public assistance yourself.

Do I need to have legal custody or guardianship of the child to be eligible?

No, you do not need to have legal custody or guardianship of the child to be eligible.

¹ Some of the listed agencies provide basic referrals at no cost but charge a nominal fee for more extensive, personalized assistance.

Are any other programs available?

Yes. ACS's free Head Start program is available for children three to five years old from families earning incomes below the federal poverty level (in 2010, this was \$18,310 for a family of 3) or families able to get public assistance. There are more than 250 centers offering Head Start in New York City.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten is another free program available to four year olds from low-income households offered by ACS and the Department of Education. The child must be a resident of New York City to qualify. Both half-day and full-day programs are offered.

Out-Of-School Time is a free program available to school-age children. This after-school program provides academic, art, music and sports activities. Child care is provided during working hours when the child is not in school (before 8:30 a.m. and after 3:00 p.m. on weekdays, holidays, and during the summer).

How do I apply?

Call 311 and ask for your local Department of Social Services which will be able to tell you if you are eligible for a child care subsidy and/or provide more information about one of the programs discussed above. The 311 operator can pre-screen you for help paying for child care. Another option is to apply directly with the child care center where you would like to enroll the child. You will have to go to an eligibility interview at an ACS office in your borough.

You will have to recertify to show you continue to meet the eligibility requirements at least once a year.

What do I do if my application is denied?

ACS must give you a reason for the denial and must tell you of your right to request a fair hearing. An appeal must be filed in a timely manner, so the caregiver must make sure not to miss any deadlines. You may also contact your local ACS Resource Area to try to resolve the issue.

Who can I contact for more information?

If you are a grandparent or other relative caring for a child, you may contact **MFY's Kinship Caregiver Law Project at 212-417-3850** for advice and possible free legal representation.