



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE IN NEW MEXICO

Q: What is child care assistance?

A: Child Care Assistance helps families with monthly child care costs.

Q: How do I apply for child care assistance?

A: You must complete and sign an application and return it to your local CYFD office either in-person or by mail. Applications are available in CYFD offices or can be found here:

<https://cyfd.org/child-care-services/child-care-assistance>.

Q: What documents do I need to provide with my application?

A: If the child for whom you are seeking care is participating in the TANF program, you will not need to provide any additional documentation. If the child is not participating in the TANF program, you must provide the following:

- Proof of income;
- Proof you are attending school, like a school schedule (if applicable);
- Proof of birth for the child(ren);
- Proof of a New Mexico home address;
- Proof that the child is a U.S. citizen or eligible immigrant.

Q: Can I get child care assistance for my child if I am not a U.S. Citizen?

A: Yes. There are no citizenship or immigration requirements for parents or guardians. Even undocumented parents and guardians can get assistance for an eligible child.

Q: What income counts for determining eligibility?

A: Only the income of biological parents, stepparents and legal guardians living in the household with the child(ren) counts.

Q: What are the income limits for the program?

A: Families must meet the household income limits below to get assistance:

Household Size	Max. monthly income to be approved.	Max. monthly income to remain eligible
2	\$2,030	\$2,707
3	\$2,553	\$3,403
4	\$3,075	\$4,100
5	\$3,598	\$4,797
6	\$4,120	\$5,493
7	\$4,643	\$6,190
8	\$5,165	\$6,887

Q: Who is counted in determining household size?

A: All biological parents, stepparents and/or legal guardians living in a household as well as their dependents. Grandparents are not included in household size unless they are the child's legal guardian

Q: How long does it take to get approved for Child Care Assistance?

A: After you submit a completed and signed application, you have **14 days** to provide any necessary documents. If you need more time, you can request an extension up to **30 days**. Once CYFD has received your application and any necessary documentation, they must provide you with a written decision within **10 days**. If you are denied benefits or if CYFD has not given you a written decision on your application within 10 days of you turning in all require documentation, you have a right to a fair hearing. More information is available below.

Q: Who will provide care for my child if I am approved?

A: You can choose the type of child care that meets the needs of your family. Your child can receive care from a child care center, an in-home provider, a church/religious organization, or in an after-school care program.

Q: How many hours of child care assistance can I get?

A: You and your caseworker will discuss how many hours per month you will need to cover the time you are working or are in school. CYFD must give you enough child care hours to cover your time in school and/or work, as well as commute and/or study time. 12 You can ask for a hearing if CYFD does not give you the number of hours for which you believe you are eligible.

Q: How much will I have to pay for child care assistance?

A: Depending on your income, you may be required to pay a small co-pay each month. The chart below will give you an idea of what you can expect.

	Co-Payment Based on Household Size		
Monthly Household Income	2 Person	3 Person	4 Person
\$801-\$850	\$22.00	\$18.00	\$15.00
\$1,001-\$1,050	\$34.00	\$27.00	\$23.00
\$1,201-\$1,250	\$50.00	\$39.00	\$33.00

Q: How long will I get child care assistance before I have to renew?

A: You will get child care assistance for a full 12 months before you have to renew.

Q: How do I renew my child care assistance?

A: The month before your current contract ends, CYFD must send a letter asking if you want to remain in the program. When you receive the letter, you must call CYFD to set up an interview. You will have to provide documents showing that you are still eligible (proof of income and that you are in an approved activity – i.e. school, work or TANF) and you must let CYFD know about any changes to your household.

Q: Are there any changes I have to report between approval and renewal?

A: Yes. If you are unemployed, will be out of school, or will not be participating in an educational activity for more than three months, you must report the change to your caseworker. You must also report if the number of hours you are working, attending school, or are participating in an educational activity are reduced for more than three months. You must also report if someone moves in or out of your household.

Q: Can I still get child care assistance if I lose my job or start working less?

Prepared by the NM Center on Law and Poverty www.nmpoertylaw.org (505) 255-2840

Have more questions?

Contact Maria Griego at (505)255-2840 or maria@nmpoertylaw.org

A: You can keep getting child care assistance if you lose your job, stop attending school or your work hours are reduced for three months or less. If the change will be for more than three months, you must report the change to your caseworker and he or she will review your case to see if you can still get assistance.

Q: Will I have to enforce child support against an absent parent?

A: Most parents have to enforce child support against an absent parent to get child care assistance. If the child is participating in the TANF program, you will not have to enforce child support because you have already complied with the requirement. You might be exempt if the absent parent is providing financial support like help with food or housing. You do not have to enforce child support if it would not be in your or the child's best interest. This includes if your family is experiencing domestic violence or if the child was born due to rape or incest. For more information on the domestic violence exemption, see below.

Q: What if my family experienced domestic violence and cannot enforce child support?

A: If you or anyone in your family has experienced domestic violence that makes it unsafe for you to enforce child support against an absent parent, you are exempt from the requirement. You must request an exemption in writing. You can write a letter to CYFD or you can use a request form available at the NM Center on Law and Poverty. CYFD may require that you provide documentation that you are experiencing domestic violence, like a letter from a domestic violence shelter, social worker or counselor, or medical records. Police reports and court orders should not be required.

Q: What should I do if I am denied child care assistance?

A: If you are denied child care assistance or disagree with something in your child care assistance case, you can ask for a fair hearing. You have ten days from the date of CYFD's decision to request a hearing. Your request must be in writing. If you give the request to your caseworker or the receptionist at the CYFD office, you should ask for a receipt.