



The Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services, Maine Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP) Consumer Education Statement

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is the lead agency responsible to plan and administer child care subsidies funded by the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). This work is done by the Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP), in the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs>.

The Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act of 2014 enhances statutory development and school success; and supports parents who work or are in training or education. The CCDBG Act also supports parent and family member involvement in the development of their children in child care settings. As the lead agency, Maine DHHS assists this effort by sharing consumer education details about child care services to parents and families to help them make informed choices.

The Child Care Affordability Program (CCAP):

- ❖ The CCAP is a statewide program that supports eligible families to pay child care.

The Child Care Affordability Program:

- ❖ Helps eligible families pay for child care if they work, go to school, attend a job training program, or are retired and the legal guardian of a child;
- ❖ Ensures the health and safety of children in child care;
- ❖ Provides equal access to high quality child care for families with low income; and
- ❖ Enhances the quality of child care and the Early Care and Education workforce.

To learn more about the CCAP:

1. Call 1-877-680-5866 or 207-624-7999; **or**
2. Email CCAP.DHHS@maine.gov; **or**
3. Go online to <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/paying-for-child-care>; **or**
4. Fax 207-287-6308; **or**
5. Write to:
Child Care Affordability Program
Office of Child and Family Services:
11 State House Station
2 Anthony Avenue
Augusta, ME 04333



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There are three (3) ways you can apply for the CCAP:

1. Complete the application found at <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/paying-for-child-care>; **or**
2. Call OCFS - 1-877-680-5866 or 207-624-7999, Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm; **or**
3. Visit a DHHS Office to receive a printed application. To find a DHHS office, go to <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/about/contact/offices> or call 1-877-680-5866 or 207-624-7999.

There are three (3) ways to return your completed application to the OCFS:

1. Fax: 207-287-6308; **or**
2. Email: CCAP.DHHS@maine.gov; **or**
3. Mail: OCFS, 11 State House Station, 2 Anthony Avenue, Augusta, ME 04333

Note: Do not bring your completed application to a DHHS Office.

OCFS staff will review your application to:

- ❖ Determine if you are eligible for the program; and/or
- ❖ Approve the child care provider you chose.

Important CCAP Income and Eligibility Guidelines:

- ❖ All families must meet income guidelines at or below one hundred twenty five (125%) of the State Median Income.
- ❖ Add three percent (3%) for additional family members. The total amount of assessed fees to a family shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the family's gross income for all their children.
- ❖ Fees are assessed to all families. The parent fee is determined by the:
 - o Number of individuals in the family;
 - o Gross income or if self-employed, allowable net income; and
 - o Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) level of the Early Care and Education Program.
- ❖ The parent fee does not vary with the:
 - o Number of children receiving child care services;
 - o Amount of child care services they need; or
 - o Type of child care services the parent chooses to use.
- ❖ Weekly fee assessments must be rounded down to the nearest dollar. All assessed parent fees shall be paid directly to the provider by the parent. To learn more about parent fees, go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-care/paying-for-child-care>



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- ❖ Parent(s) enrolled in job training, or an educational program must prove enrollment the first time they fill out an application and when redetermined. They must attend classes in person or online.
- ❖ If a parent is income eligible and provides documents from the Social Security Administration (SSA) or the MaineCare Medical Review Team, identifying a disability that makes them: 1) unable to take care of the child(ren); or 2) unable to work and the other parent is working, attending a job training or education program, the family may be eligible for the CCAP.
- ❖ If a child is home-schooled, the parent is not eligible to receive child care subsidy during regular school hours, as defined within their school district.
- ❖ If funding is available, DHHS may waive the employment, job training or educational program requirements; and approve CCAP for no longer than twelve (12) months, for:
 - o At-risk children;
 - o A child involved in an open child protective case;
 - o A child in care and custody; or
 - o A child placed under the legal guardianship of a person who is at retirement age.

Client Income Eligibility Criteria

Individuals eligible for the CCAP from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services must comply with income eligibility criteria below.

Effective 10/19/2024

FAMILY SIZE	ANNUAL INCOME	MONTHLY INCOME (ANNUAL/12)	WEEKLY INCOME (ANNUAL/4.3)
1	\$73,618.35	\$6,134.86	\$1,426.71
2	\$96,270.15	\$8,022.51	\$1,865.70
3	\$118,921.95	\$9,910.16	\$2,304.69
4	\$141,573.75	\$11,797.81	\$2,743.68
5	\$164,225.55	\$13,685.46	\$3,182.67
6	\$186,877.35	\$15,573.11	\$3,621.65
7	\$191,124.56	\$15,927.04	\$3,703.97
8	\$195,371.78	\$16,280.98	\$3,786.27
9	\$199,618.99	\$16,634.92	\$3,868.59
10	\$203,866.20	\$16,988.85	\$3,950.90

Funds	State Funds (SPSS) Fund for a Healthy Maine (FHM)
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	Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
Income Eligibility	All families must meet income guidelines of gross family income at or below one hundred twenty-five (125%) of Maine's State Median Income.
Fee Assessment	Fees are assessed to all families.

Add three percent (3%) for additional family members. The total amount assessed fees to a family shall not exceed ten percent (10%) of the family's gross income for all their children.

Weekly fee assessments must be rounded down to the nearest dollar. All assessed parent fees shall be paid directly to the caregiver by the parent.

SMI DATA:

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocs/COMM_LIHEAP_IM%202024-02_Att4SMITable_0.pdf

Background Checks and Child Care Providers

To meet federal and state requirements for all Child Care Providers delivering direct child care services, OCFS conducts a criminal background check, that includes fingerprinting. There is no cost to child care providers for this process. Go to: [Child Care Provider Background Checks | Department of Health and Human Services \(maine.gov\)](#).

Child Care Providers are required to request background checks with the use of fingerprinting for themselves and their child care staff member(s) to include:

- ❖ All licensed child care facilities;
- ❖ Licensed family child care providers; and
- ❖ CCAP license-exempt child care providers (excluding CCAP relative child care providers).

Per Federal law (45 C.F.R. § 98.43) the following individuals must submit to background checks with the use of fingerprinting described below:

- ❖ All adults (18 years and older) residing in the location where child care services are being provided;
- ❖ Any individuals whose activities involve the care or supervision of children or who have unsupervised access to children; and
- ❖ The Child Care Provider him or herself.



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The following registries, repositories, and databases are checked for each individual for whom a background check is requested, with the mandatory use of fingerprints described below:

- ❖ National Crime Information Center National Sex Offender Registry <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/ncic#File-Types> and Federal Bureau of Investigation fingerprint check (using Next Generation Identification).
- ❖ In the State where the individual resides: State child abuse and neglect registry/database, State Bureau of Identification (SBI) <https://www.maine.gov/dps/msp/about/sbi> crime repository with fingerprints, and State Sex Offender Registry <https://www.nsopw.gov/>.
- ❖ In each State where the individual has resided at any time during the previous five (5) years: State child abuse and neglect registry/ database, SBI or comparable State agency's crime repository (with or without fingerprints), and State Sex Offender Registry.

Individuals must schedule an appointment for fingerprinting. All individuals must complete the above requirement every five (5) years. Once completed, individuals will receive a letter from the OCFS stating whether individual is eligible or ineligible **and** a letter to provide to current or prospective employers.

For instructions for Fingerprint-based Background Checks for Child Care Providers, go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ocfs/documents/cc-bgc-instructions07082020-jpf-tl-edits.pdf>

To schedule an appointment for Fingerprint-based Background Checks for Child Care Providers, go to: <https://www.identogo.com/>

For important reminders regarding fingerprint background checks for Child Care Providers, go to <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/Background%20Check%20reminders%2012.2020.pdf>

If you who do not receive your eligibility letters by mail within twenty-one (21) calendar days of your completed fingerprint appointment, please call (207) 624-7903 or email childcareoosbgc@maine.gov. You will need to provide your name, date of birth, and the Transaction ID number from your appointment.

For More Information About:

- ❖ Out of state background check requirements for those individuals living out of the State of Maine in the past five years: please call (207) 624-7903 or email childcareoosbgc@maine.gov
- ❖ Disqualifying criminal convictions, go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ocfs/documents/Matrix%20of%20Disqualifying%20Criminal%20Convictions%20for%20Child%20Care%20Providers.pdf>



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- ❖ Criminal background check appeal rights, go to:
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ocfs/documents/Criminal%20Background%20Check%20Appeal%20Rights.pdf>
- ❖ Substantiation of child abuse and neglect appeal rights, go to:
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ocfs/documents/Substantiation%20of%20Child%20Abuse%20and%20Neglect%20Appeals%20Rights.pdf>
- ❖ Conviction of misdemeanor as specified by the Department and within the preceding ten (10) years appeal rights, refer to:
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/documents/ocfs/documents/Notice%20Appeal%20Misdemeanor%20Preceding%2010%20yrs.pdf>

Rules

- ❖ To read the Child Care Provider Background Check Licensing Rule, go to
<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/sites/maine.gov.dhhs/files/inline-files/10-148%20Ch.%2034%20CC%20Background%20Check%20Licensing%20Rule%20Final%20Adoption%20Effective%205-12-22%20.pdf>

Child Care in Maine:

Child Care Choices will help you find an Early Care and Education Program.

To find an Early Care and Education Program in Maine, go to:

<https://www.childcarechoices.me/https://search.childcarechoices.me/>:

- ❖ Give full address including the city and zip code; **or**
- ❖ Give just the city; **or**
- ❖ Give just the zip code.

Choose other filter options based on your needs.

Who can be a Child Care Provider?

- ❖ Licensed child care centers;
- ❖ Licensed family child care homes;
- ❖ An adult who provides care in their own home;
- ❖ An adult who comes to your home to provide care; and
- ❖ A relative over 18 years of age.



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Process for Licensing Child Care Providers: Children's Licensing and Investigation Services (CLIS)

CLIS ensures Early Care and Education Programs are safe and healthy environments, provide care and supervision, and engage in developmentally appropriate activities to meet each child's physical and emotional needs. CLIS monitors compliance with regulations set by the DHHS under direction of the Maine Legislature. CLIS licenses and monitors: Family Child Care Homes, Child Care Centers, and Nursery Schools. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/child-care-licensing>.

Monitoring and Inspecting Child Care Providers

CLIS provides monitoring inspection reports for each on-site visit to **licensed** and **license-exempt** Early Care and Education Programs. This report outlines any health and safety violations and includes action step(s) the child care program took to correct the violation(s).

To find the licensing history and inspection reports of an Early Care and Education Program, go to: <https://search.childcarechoices.me/>.

Health and Safety Requirements for Child Care Affordability Providers

All licensed programs and license exempt providers who have an agreement to accept children on the CCAP must meet health and safety training requirements. To learn what the health and safety requirements and trainings are, go to: <https://mrtq.org/health-and-safety-training-faqs/>

Rising Stars for ME – Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS)

Maine's Rising Stars for ME provides parents with a way to easily identify high quality Early Care and Education Programs. QRIS uses Standards to evaluate and document the quality of Early Care and Education Programs by using a five (5) star process, each step leading to higher quality. Star 5 is the highest level a program can achieve. Families can use QRIS to guide their choices for quality child care. For more information, go to <https://childcarechoices.me/index.php/quality-rating-and-improvement-system/>.

Resources and Services for Individuals, Children and Families

- ❖ **Help Me Grow (HMG) Maine** is a free service available to children up to eight (8) years of age and their families. HMG connects to information and services about child development and community resources. In partnership with 2-1-1 Maine, any parent, caregiver, or provider can call for support. The HMG team will listen, link you to services, and supply ongoing support when needed. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development>



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- ❖ **Access Maine** is an online resource guide with information to connect people living in Maine to public programs, services, and other resources that are available to provide support they need to be safe, happy, healthy, and successful. Go to: <https://www.accessmaine.org/>
- ❖ ChildCare.gov helps parents find safe, quality child care services in their communities 24 hours a day. ChildCare.gov provides the widest possible access to services for families who speak languages different than English. Go to: <https://childcare.gov/>
- ❖ DHHS programs and services including information about food, money, housing, employment, and insurance. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/programs-services>
- ❖ The Higher Opportunity for Pathways to Employment (HOPE) Program helps Maine families pursue training and education beyond high school and achieve their career plans by addressing barriers to success. HOPE helps cover costs related to school and provides the tools and resources whether you are seeking a short-term training certificate, or an associate or bachelor's degree. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/hope/>
- ❖ Information about DHHS benefits to help individuals and families find and receive assistance like financial, food stamps, medical, child care, nutrition, and community services. DHHS will assist you to apply for benefits and renew benefits for cash assistance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) health care coverage, and home heating assistance (LIHEAP). Go to: <https://www1.maine.gov/benefits/account/login.html>
- ❖ Information to help you choose the best child care for you and your child. Includes steps to choosing safe and healthy child-care, high-quality child care for a child with special needs, matching your infant's or toddler's style to the right child care setting and more. Go to: <https://www.childcarechoices.me/index.php/resources/>
- ❖ Developmental Monitoring (watching how your child grows and changes over time) and Developmental Screening (a closer look at how your child is developing) is described. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development/developmental-screening>
- ❖ An overview of the deaths and serious injuries in child care settings in Maine. Go to: <https://www.childcarechoices.me/index.php/mainedata/>
- ❖ Maine Women, Infants, and Children Nutrition Program (WIC) serves all Maine families with free nutrition advice, tips for staying healthy, and resources for growing families. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/wic/>
- ❖ Maine's Child Protection Services receives complaints called into the statewide Child Protective Services Intake hotline. Child Care Licensing Specialists are assigned to the daily complaint intake. Calls come to the main number for Child Care Licensing and transferred to the Child Care Licensing Specialist. Any parental complaints can be reported to the DHHS by phone, fax, or email. **To make a complaint call: 1-800-452-1999.** Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-welfare>



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- ❖ Mandated Reporters are individuals required by law to identify suspected child abuse and neglect quickly enough to avoid serious and long-term damage to a child. Professionals who frequently meet children in their work are in the best position to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect. The OCFS runs the child abuse and neglect statewide hotline. Mandated Reporters call this hotline to make a report. Staff guide callers through the process of making a report of suspected abuse and neglect. The **hotline is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call 1-800-452-1999 or 711 (Maine Relay) to report child abuse or neglect.** Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/provider-resources/reporting-suspected-child-abuse-and-neglect/mandated-reporter-information>
- ❖ The Office of Constituent Services helps people with questions or concerns about DHHS programs and services. Constituent Services coordinates with the Offices of the Governor and Commissioner, Maine's congressional delegation, State legislators and the public to resolve problems and answer inquiries. Go to: <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/about/contact>, **NOTE:** Constituent Services **must not** be used in an emergency or to report abuse or neglect of any kind. **Call 1-800-452-1999 or 711 (Maine Relay) to report child abuse or neglect.**