

# Guide to the Child Care Assistance Program (Ramsey County)



## **Section 1: Program Information**

**Purpose of the Program:** The Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides financial assistance to help families with low incomes pay for child care so that parents or guardians may pursue employment or education leading to employment. You can find more detailed information in this [Booklet](#).

If your application is approved, you will be assigned a caseworker who will help you understand the program and assist you in finding a provider (a person or organization, such as a daycare center or babysitter, who will supply you with child care).

**Sub Programs:** There are several different options for child care that families may be eligible for. They include:

**MFIP/DWP:** This program serves families that receive cash and/or food portion benefits through either the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) or the Diversionary Work Program (DWP). In order to be eligible for child care assistance through this program an employment plan must be created with an employment services worker. This program is fully funded and has no waiting lists. If you're receiving benefits through MFIP or DWP, you should already be on an employment plan.

**Transition Year:** This program is for families that left MFIP/DWP within the last twelve months and are needing care in order to look for a job. Parents cannot be attending any type of education program, and must have received MFIP/DWP financial benefits for at least three out of the six months prior to the benefits ending. The program is fully funded and has no waiting lists.

**Basic Sliding Fee:** This program serves families that do not meet criteria for MFIP/DWP or Transition Year Child Care Programs and need child care assistance to support employment, job search, or remedial and postsecondary education. This program is *not fully funded* and may have a waiting list.

If you are in need of food and/or cash assistance along with child care, you have the option to fill out a combined application form. For a description of available

programs, including MFIP, DWP, and SNAP, visit the [Economic Supports](#) page on Minnesota's Department of Human Services website.

Before you fill out an application, we highly recommend you call the Ramsey Intake Screening Line at 651-641-6665. A county worker will ask you for your income information and then tell you which (if any) programs you are eligible for. If you qualify for Basic Sliding Fee Child Care assistance but there is no funding available, you can ask to be placed on a waiting list. If you were previously receiving Transition Year Child Care Assistance, you may be able to get an extension until your name reaches the top of the waiting list.

**Here's a sample script you can use on the phone:** "Hello, my name is [blank] and I am a resident of Ramsey county. I would like to see if I am eligible for any Child Care Assistance programs."

### **Questions you should be prepared to answer:**

- How many children do you have who are in need of care? How old are they? Are they in school? Do they have disabilities? Do any of them have a shared custody arrangement with a family member who lives outside your home?
- Are you currently receiving or have you ever received help from food or cash public assistance programs such as SNAP, MFIP, or DWP?
- If you are employed, what is your work schedule? If you have one, what is your annual gross income? **You may be asked to provide this information for each adult in your household.**
- Are you currently unemployed but searching for work?
- Are you enrolled in an educational program?
- What is your housing/living situation? Do you get a housing or Section 8 subsidy?

### **Finding a Provider**

You can apply for child care assistance BEFORE you find a provider. If you are eligible, your case can be suspended for up to 12 months until you find a provider, meaning that they will wait for a year until you are ready and then give you help paying for child care.

Notify your case worker as soon as you select a provider, or if you need assistance finding one. For lists of providers, visit [ParentAware.org](#) or call 888-291-9811. You can

also go to the website [Child Care Aware of Minnesota](#). Under “search,” you can look for information on centers/preschools, family child care, and Head Start. Operators are available in Hmong, Spanish, and Somali. Parents are encouraged to call 1-888-291-9811 (651-665-0150 in the metro area) for personalized support in their home language.

If you have already chosen a provider, to see if they’re in good standing you can call Ramsey County’s Family Child Care Licensing at 651-266-3781 or enter your provider’s name into the [DHS Licencing Lookup](#).

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Can I use more than one child care provider with CCAP?**

Yes. CCAP can authorize up to two providers (one primary and one secondary) per child.

### **Can I change my child care provider at any time with CCAP?**

Yes, but you must tell your child care worker 15 days before you change providers-- unless your child is in danger. If you think your child is in danger, please talk to your child care worker right away.

### **Do I or my children have to be U.S. citizens to get CCAP?**

Children for whom you are applying for CCAP must be U.S. citizens or have an acceptable immigration status. Parents or other caregivers do not have to be U.S. citizens or have an acceptable immigration status but they do need to provide proof of identity and residence. For more detailed information, see **Section 4: Application Process** on page 8 of this document.

### **I am an immigrant. If I get help from CCAP, will I be a public charge?**

No. Getting CCAP does not mean you are a public charge. You can still become a U.S. citizen if you get Child Care Assistance.

### **Does it matter how long I have lived in Minnesota?**

No. But you do have to apply in the county you live in now.

### **Can I apply for CCAP while I am pregnant, if I have no other children?**

Yes, but you cannot get CCAP until after the child is born. Some counties have a waiting list, so it is best to apply as soon as possible to get on the list.

**How often do I have to renew my CCAP?**

Usually every 12 months. You will be sent a “redetermination” form in the mail. Fill it out and mail it back right away so that you can continue to get help paying for child care from CCAP.

**Is there a limit to how long I can get CCAP?**

No.

For a more detailed list of frequently asked questions, visit:

[http://www.bridgetobenefits.org/Child\\_Care\\_Assistance\\_Program\\_CCAP2#faq\\_7d74dd9d7dea4e42847f2920d11c50a1](http://www.bridgetobenefits.org/Child_Care_Assistance_Program_CCAP2#faq_7d74dd9d7dea4e42847f2920d11c50a1)

**Contact Information (With whom will participants be communicating?):****Ramsey County Community Human Service Department**

**Address:** Ramsey County Government Center East Building, 160 East Kellogg Boulevard  
St. Paul, MN 55101-1494

*Note: Due to COVID-19, the Government East Building is closed for in-person appointments. Limited walk-ins are available only as a last resort option for issues that cannot be resolved online, by phone, or by mail. Residents are still welcome to leave applications in the drop-box outside the building.*

**Phone numbers: 651-641-6665:** This is the Intake Screening Line, where you can ask about your eligibility. They will also answer general questions about Child Care Assistance.

**651-266-4444:** This number is specifically for families looking to apply for Child Care Assistance through MFIP, or Transition Year programs, but can also be used to determine eligibility or ask general questions about Child Care Assistance.

**Website:** <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/assistance-support/assistance/financial-assistance/child-care-assistance>

For additional information about Child Care Assistance programs and providers in Ramsey County:

**Think Small (Ramsey County contracted agency)**

**Address:** 10 Yorkton Court St. Paul, MN (also known as Little Canada) 55117

**Website:**

[https://www.thinksmall.org/for\\_parents\\_and\\_guardians/paying\\_for\\_childcare/help\\_paying\\_for\\_child\\_care/](https://www.thinksmall.org/for_parents_and_guardians/paying_for_childcare/help_paying_for_child_care/)

**Section 2: Eligibility Requirements**

**Basic Eligibility:** To qualify, your family must:

- Have children needing care who meet citizenship and immigration requirements and are 12 years old or younger, or 13 or 12 years old with disabilities.
- Be income eligible;
- Meet employment and training requirements:
  - Work at least an average of 20 hours per week (10 hours per week if a full-time student) at minimum wage, OR
  - Participate in job search, attend school or training classes, OR
  - Comply with the activities of an approved Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)/Diversionary Work Program (DWP) employment plan.

**Income Eligibility:** To be income eligible to receive child care assistance, families currently receiving benefits from the Minnesota Family Investment Program must have a gross annual income that is at or below the 67 percent exit level for their household size. All other Child Care Assistance Program applicants must have a gross annual income that is at or below the 47 percent entrance level for their household size.

Once a family is determined eligible, their gross annual income must be at or below the 85 percent exit level for their household size during their 12-month eligibility period to continue receiving child care assistance. Most families have to pay a portion of the child care cost. This portion is called a copayment and is based on the family's size and gross annual income.

Click on this document to see specifications for entrance level, exit level, and biweekly copay amounts by household size:

<https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-6413H-ENG>

- Guide: See page 1 for details about individual income limits. On page 3, you can find charts that explain entrance and exit levels for multiple-person families. For example, if you are in a four-person household and you are receiving benefits from the Minnesota Family Investment program, you are only eligible if your gross annual income is at or below \$33,247. If you are not receiving

benefits from MFI, you are eligible if your income is at or below \$47,394. Once you're determined eligible, your income must be at or below \$60,127 for the next 12 months \*check this\* in order for you to continue receiving child care assistance.

You can use this online screening tool to see which programs you're eligible for based on income: <http://www.bridgetobenefits.org/Home2>

### **Section 3: Application Process (What do you need?)**

#### **The following information and documents are required for the application:**

##### APPLICANT'S PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Name
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Social security number \*\*
- Address
- Phone number
- Proof of identity (copy of driver's license, state ID, school ID, or birth certificate)
- Proof of residence address (an item listed above or a recent utility bill, rental lease, or mortgage statement)
- Have you ever requested child care assistance? If yes, when and where?

\*\*Though you will be asked to provide social security numbers, you are not required to do so. It will not impact your ability to get any benefits if you do not provide them. However, children for whom you are applying for CCAP must be U.S citizens or have an acceptable immigration status. Parents or other caregivers do NOT need to be U.S citizens or have an acceptable immigration status, but you need proof of identity and residence.

ADULTS - Including yourself, list all adults in your household-- whether or not they are family members-- as well as the parents of children living with you.

- Name, gender, date of birth, social security number, phone number, address
- Proof of identity (copy of driver's license, state ID, school ID, or birth certificate)

CHILDREN - In order from oldest to youngest, list all children under the age of 18 who live with you. Include children 18 or older if they are full-time students and you provide

50% or more of their financial support. Provide the following information for each child:

- Proof of relationship to you (birth certificate, adoption record, legal guardianship)
- Proof of age (one of the items listed above or a school or immunization record)
- Proof of citizenship or immigration status for each child in need of child care assistance, such as a birth certificate, an adoption record, or a United States Citizenship and Immigration Services card
- List all children who have a parent who does not live in your home. If your child spends time with his or her parent, describe the schedule or shared custody arrangements.

Note: proof of citizenship or immigration status will NOT be used for immigration purposes. Children do not need to be U.S. citizens, but they must have an acceptable immigration status.

#### HOUSING INFORMATION

- Type of housing/living situation
- If you get a housing or Section 8 subsidy (yes or no)

STUDENT INFORMATION - List all children in your family who are now in school or plan to go to school within the next 12 months. Include children 18 or older if they are full-time students and you provide 50% or more of their financial support.

- School start and end dates
- Grade
- Days and times student attends school

EARNED INCOME - Give the following information for any family members who are currently earning income (wages).

- Proof of work schedule and income for the most recent 30 days (wages, tips, commissions, and bonuses)
- Employer (name, phone number, address)
- Hourly pay rate
- Number of hours per week
- Frequency of pay
- Total amount paid before deductions
- Work start date
- Dates of first and last paychecks

If you or someone in your family is self-employed, include proof of all income and expenses such as federal tax returns or business ledgers, as well as a work schedule. If you have family members who need help paying for child care in order to attend school or training classes, include proof of school schedules that show the days and times classes meet, including school breaks.

UNEARNED INCOME - This includes public assistance programs (MFIP, DWP, GA, Tribal TANF), child or spousal support, unemployment insurance, and veteran benefits.

- Name of recipient
- Income amount
- How often do they receive the income?
- Proof (check stub, award letter, financial aid form, or a written statement from the source of the income for the most current 30 days)

DEDUCTIONS - If you or a family member has any of the expenses listed (medical, dental, vision, and insurance premiums, child support for a child not living in the home, or court ordered spousal support) and you are NOT reimbursed for them, provide the following information:

- How often do you pay?
- Amount
- Proof of deductions (check stubs, benefit statements, or premium statements)

CHILD CARE NEEDS - If you currently use or have chosen a child care provider, you will need to list:

- Start and end date of child care
- Child care schedule
- Provider's name, phone number, and address
- Location of child care

Remember that you do NOT need to be registered with a child care provider before



you fill out the application, but you can be. If you don't have a provider yet, your child care worker will help you find one after your application is approved.

#### **Section 4: Expectations (What will happen?)**

##### **What is the timeline for receiving services?**

Once your application is received, you will receive a written notice about your eligibility within 30 calendar days, or 45 days if needed.

If your application is not processed within 30 days, you have a legal right to ask why.

If you are unhappy with the action taken or feel the agency did not act on your request for assistance, you may appeal. For access to free legal services, Contact Ramsey County at 651-266-4444.

Submit your appeal request:

Online: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-0033-ENG>

Write: Minnesota Department of Human Services Appeals Division P.O. Box 64941 St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

Fax: 651-431-7523

Call: Metro: 651-431-3600 Greater Minnesota: 800-657-3510 or use your preferred relay service

##### **What additional steps must participants take to receive services?**

- After your application is approved, you will be assigned a caseworker who will help you understand the program and assist you in finding a provider.
- If you have chosen a provider, you will also receive a notice informing you how many hours you are authorized. This notice is called a Service Authorization. Your provider will also receive a Service Authorization. Child care will not be paid until Service Authorizations are issued and the provider submits billing forms.
- You may be required to pay a co-payment fee to your child care provider. If you do not pay the fee, your child care assistance will be terminated until fees are paid in full or satisfactory payment agreements have been made with the county and your child care provider.
- You may be required to pay additional costs when your child care provider charges a rate that is more than the maximum rate in your county.
- If you receive cash assistance and/or child care assistance, you must report changes which may affect your benefits to the county agency within 10 days after the change has occurred.
- You may be required to report changes in employment, income, property, household, housing and utility loss, or school attendance.

##### **How to apply:**

**If you have internet access, follow these steps:**

1. Before you fill out an application, call the Intake Screening Line at 651-641-6665 to speak to a county worker and see which programs you're eligible for.
2. If your county worker asks you to fill out an application, you have four options.
  - a. Print this [form](#) and fill it out by hand.
  - b. Go to <https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/policies-procedures/child-care-and-early-education/child-care-assistance-program/#:~:text=The%20Child%20Care%20Assistance%20Program,and%20prepared%20to%20enter%20school>. Scroll down to "Family eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program." If you click on "Application process for families," you will see this page: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-3550-ENG>. Click "complete the form electronically." This will allow you to type your answers into a pdf, but it requires Adobe Reader or Acrobat. If you don't have those programs on your device, you will need to use a different option. When you're finished, print the form.
  - c. If you wish to complete a combined application for food and cash assistance as well as child care, print and fill out this [form](#) AND this [addendum sheet](#). To complete these forms using a fillable pdf, go to for the combined application and <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-5223D-ENG> for the addendum.
  - d. Submit an application online at [ApplyMN](#). (This allows you to complete a combined application if you wish.) You will have to create an account first.
3. Read all instructions at the beginning and end of the application.
4. If you need assistance at any point, call your county worker at 651-266-4444. Here's a script you can use: "Hello, my name is [blank]. I'm currently filling out an application for the Child Care Assistance Program and I had a question about..."
5. Send your completed application, along with any supporting documents, to your county worker. You have five options for this:
  - a. **Drop off your application** in the drop box at 160 East Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55101-1494 between 8 a.m and 4:30 p.m. The box is picked up every weekday (Monday-Friday) in the morning and afternoon. If an item is picked up at 7:30 a.m, it is time stamped with the previous business (Monday-Friday) day, meaning they will consider your application as having been submitted the business day before. If an

item is picked up at 3:30 p.m, it will be time stamped with the current business day. If you would like your application to be received the day you drop it off, try to arrive before 3:30 p.m.

- b. **Mail to:** 160 East Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55101-1494
- c. **Fax to:** 651-266-3942
- d. **Email to:** [fas.forms@ramseycounty.us](mailto:fas.forms@ramseycounty.us). If you use a fillable pdf, you can attach it as a document. If you handwrite your answers, you can scan the forms or take a picture.
- e. **Submit your application online** at [ApplyMN](#).

For applications in Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese, or for more accessible applications, call 651-266-4444, and request that one be mailed, faxed, or emailed to you.

**If you don't have internet access, call 651-266-4444 and request that an application be mailed or faxed to you.** Here's a script you can use: "Hello, my name is [blank]. I'm a resident of Ramsey County and I would like to be [mailed or faxed] an application for the Child Care Assistance Program." You can ask for forms in Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese, or an application in large-print.

Note: You may fill out the application as an authorized representative of a person who is requesting or receiving assistance.

## Screenshots

### Step (2) b

The screenshot shows the Minnesota Department of Human Services website. The header includes the logo and navigation links for 'Report Abuse' and 'Report Fraud'. The main content area is titled 'Child Care Assistance Program processes and tasks'. It features a sidebar with a 'Partners and providers' menu and a main text block describing the program's purpose: 'The Child Care Assistance Program provides financial assistance to help families with low incomes pay for child care so that parents may pursue employment or education leading to employment, and that children are well cared for and prepared to enter school. Our partners and providers in this program provide child care for more than 30,000 children every month.' Below this, there is a 'Reimbursement' section with links for 'Registering as a child care provider', 'Billing and receiving payments', and 'Reimbursement of Child Care Assistance Program providers'.

- [Licensing requirements](#)
- [Child Care Assistance Program \(CCAP\) law changes effective April 23, 2018](#)

## Family eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program

Providers may need to know how families apply for, and receive, child care assistance.

- [Application process for families to receive child care assistance](#)

There are three ways to apply for child care assistance:

- Fill out the [Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program Application \(DHS-3550\) \(PDF\)](#). Mail or bring the completed form to the [county or tribal human services office](#), or [local contracted agency](#). The application is available in Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish and Vietnamese.
- Fill out the [Combined Application - Child Care Assistance \(DHS-32290\) \(PDF\)](#) form if also applying for cash and/or food assistance. Mail or bring the completed form to the [county or tribal human services office](#), or [local contracted agency](#).
- Apply online at [app4web.dhs.mn.gov](http://app4web.dhs.mn.gov).

- [Family eligibility for CCAP and co-payments](#)
- [Waiting list](#)



### Minnesota Child Care Assistance Program Application (DHS-3550)



#### Complete the form electronically

*If you are having trouble viewing the PDF in your browser, [download the PDF](#) and open it with Adobe Reader or Acrobat. The downloaded file will be named "form.pdf."*



#### Print the form to complete it by hand

For more troubleshooting help, [see the DHS website](#).

**Updated: 8/10/2020**

### About Summer Reads:

This resource was created by Summer Reads VISTA members. Summer Reads is an [AmeriCorps VISTA national service](#) program of Literacy Minnesota. For 8 weeks over the summer, Summer Reads VISTA members volunteer full-time as children's/youth literacy mentors in schools, libraries and out-of-school-time programs across Minnesota. They bring literacy to life for low-income students through a variety of activities – one-on-one tutoring, creative enrichment activities like using arts and drama to explore language or practicing vocabulary and comprehension in science and other subjects. They also connect students and parents/caregivers to community resources through wrap-around basic needs support.

At the same time, the VISTA members build their own leadership, explore career paths, pay for college and become lifelong advocates for the communities they serve due to the power of their experience. [www.literacymn.org/summerreads](http://www.literacymn.org/summerreads)