

# Subsidized Child Care in Massachusetts

## Start Here- Childcare Resource & Referral (CCR&R) Agencies

Your local CCR&R can help you understand childcare options and find childcare and after-school care. They also can help you apply for Income-Eligible childcare (more below). To find your local agency, visit <https://eecweb.eec.state.ma.us/ChildCareSearch/CCRR.aspx> or call 1-800-424-2246.

## DTA Child Care Services (TAFDC)

**If you currently receive TAFDC or have in the last 12 months you may be eligible for free or low-cost child care.** Eligible families get first priority for child care slots and do not have to put their names on a waiting list. To qualify you must be working, looking for a job, in an approved education or job training program, or disabled.

- **Apply through your TAFDC case worker.**

For more information, see <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/get-childcare-and-transportation-help>.

## Income-Eligible Child Care

If you have a **low-income, but do not qualify for TAFDC you may be eligible for Income-Eligible child care** from the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). To qualify **all adults in your family** must be

- working, looking for work, or enrolled in an education or training program for a certain number of hours or
- retired and age 65+ or
- have a documented disability

Children must be under 13 or have special needs. **Children must be U.S. citizens or eligible noncitizens. There are no immigration status requirements for parents or caregivers.**

### Income limits:

The amount a family pays for child care depends on income and family size.

- Household gross income cannot be more than 85% of the State Median Income (SMI) see <https://mass.gov/doc/ccfa-smi-income-eligibility-fy2024/download>
- Families in the program remain eligible until their gross family household income reaches 100% of the SMI
- Child care costs are capped at 7% of income

- To calculate your family household income see online income calculator: <https://c2acr388.caspio.com/dp/6a9e900054d4669ad2284f75b613>
- **Apply through your local CCR&R agency (see above)**
- **Waitlists-** There are waitlists for income-eligible childcare. If you qualify for a priority you may get help right away. If your situation is not in a priority category (see below), the waitlist can be several years long, and you may only get help if there are no priority families on the waitlist.

**Priority categories:**

- children in foster care referred by DCF
- children of homeless families
- children of military personnel deployed to a war zone
- children of teen parents (younger than 20)
- children living with grandparents or guardians
- children of parents with disabilities, where the disability prevents the parent from caring for the child
- children with special needs
- brothers and sisters of children already getting income-eligible child care
- children who switch from one type of subsidized child care to another, such as:
- children who were getting DTA child care but are no longer eligible
- relocated children who got subsidized care in their former community
- children who left subsidized care within the past 3 months for an approved reason such as summer break and now want to reenroll
- children who "aged out" of the subsidized program they were in and need a different program, or need summer-only care

For more information, call Mass 211 by dialing 2-1-1, 877-211-6277, or TTY at 508-370-4890 or see <http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/financial-assistance/financial-assistance-for-families/>.

**Homeless Child Care**

You may qualify for homeless child care if you live in a homeless shelter and need childcare to look for permanent housing, go to school, job training, or work.

**Note:** If you live in shelter, but were not referred by DTA and are not in an Employment Services Program (ESP), you may not be eligible for child care assistance. Please check with your shelter worker or CCR&R Agency (see above).

**See also: Income-Eligible Child Care above** as your children may qualify for a priority.

**Teen Parent Child Care**

If you are a low-income teen parent who is in high school, a GED program, job training, or working you may qualify for free child care and support services.

**Eligibility:**

- **If you receive TAFDC** you should speak with your worker about child care.
- **If you do not receive TAFDC** for yourself or your children, you must be living with your parents to qualify. Contact your local CCR&R agency (see above) for other teen child care programs.

### **Head Start / Early Head Start**

If you have a low income and your children are age five or younger you may be eligible for child care financial assistance through Head Start or Early Head Start. Both programs give families a wide range of educational and social services.

Apply at your local Head Start Center: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>.

For more information, call 1-866-763-6481 or see <https://www.mass.gov/head-start>.

### **After School Programs**

- **YMCAs**- <https://ymcaboston.org/youth-and-family/youth-education/before-after-school/>
- **Boys' and Girls' Clubs**- call 404-487-5700 or see <https://www.bgca.org/get-involved/find-a-club>
- **Boston Youth Sanctuary**- call 617-322-3380 or see <http://www.bostonyouthsanctuary.org/>- therapeutic after-school program for youth ages 6-11 with trauma histories (must live and go to school in Roxbury, Dorchester, or Mattapan).