

Gov. Pritzker Announces Significant Expansion of Financial Assistance for Families Seeking Child Care and Providers

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DECATUR - Building on his commitment to making Illinois the leading state in the country for families raising young children, Governor JB Pritzker today announced a significant expansion of financial assistance for both families and providers that allow

children to return to quality, affordable child care programs. Eighty percent of families will pay less for child care under this latest round of changes, to be administered by the Illinois Department of Human Services' (DHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).

“When I took office, I said that we are aiming to make Illinois the best state in the nation for families raising young children. Today, I’m proud to announce another important step in that direction. We are making a series of new investments to make childcare more affordable for Illinois families, and deliver more dollars to providers,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “We’re ensuring quality childcare is accessible for more people – allowing more people to return to work without worry about where their kids will go during the day and helping Illinois’ childcare network rebuild after the last 16 months.”

Beginning July 1, DHS will facilitate the following improvements:

- **Reducing family payments:** Family payments or copayments -- the monthly amount parents are required to pay to childcare providers for the cost of their child care -- will be permanently lowered to \$1 per month for families with incomes at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL). 80% of all families will see a reduction in their monthly co-pay.
- **Preserving co-pay percentage limits:** Family payments will remain permanently capped at 7% of family income, with co-pays for 80% of families falling below that rate.
- **Helping families as income grows:** Going forward, CCAP families will now remain eligible until the family’s income surpasses 250% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), instead of the current cap of 225%. The income thresholds to be eligible for and to remain on the Child Care Assistance Program have been updated to current FPL and State Median Income (SMI) amounts. Payments will increase from there on a sliding scale based on family income. These improvements allow families more flexibility as people begin to return to work and rebuild from the financial impact of the COVID 19 pandemic.
- **Increasing reimbursement rates** by 3.5% for all CCAP providers to help providers keep their doors open and fully recover from the pandemic.
- **Improving predictability for providers:** If a child receiving CCAP attends at least 70% of eligible days in a month, providers will be paid for the full month. The previous policy required an 80% attendance rate. This change will allow for more stable payments for providers in the event of occasional absences.

“The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an acute child care crisis. Working parents lost care and child-care workers found themselves without jobs. Parents, mostly mothers, [left jobs or reduced hours](#) to fill the gap. Child care is the work that enables all other work; child care allows parents to work while their children experience the myriad of benefits that come from high-quality early care and education and I’m pleased to work with Governor Pritzker to provide this much needed relief,” said Grace B. Hou, Secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

“If we are ever going to break the cycle of poverty, Gov. Pritzker and Sec. Hou are on the right track with helping families have access to high quality childcare in Illinois. They continue to fight to make sure that children in Illinois receive the best start at life by having a strong start in early childhood education. Working families should have high quality options of childcare for their children, regardless of income. I applaud the Governor and Sec. Hou for being laser focused on helping families meet the financial needs for a bright future with a high quality and afford childcare program,” said Representative LaShawn Ford (D-Chicago).

“As we work to rebuild Illinois, it’s time to start treating child care as essential infrastructure and these changes are a positive step in the right direction to do that. Ensuring that all families have access to quality childcare allows us to give back to the frontline workers that have assisted us throughout the course of the pandemic. Governor Pritzker’s improvements will help alleviate labor shortages in a number of sectors by allowing parents to more easily get back to work as the state reopens,” said Representative Lakesia Collins (D-Chicago).

“Child care is essential to working families, and our recovery and growth as a state. These actions will help keep child care affordable for families and providers’ doors open. As advocates and providers, we celebrate these actions from the Governor, which continue to prioritize children, families, and the providers that support them,” said April Janney, President & CEO of Illinois Action for Children.

IDHS' Child Care Assistance Program provides low-income, working families with access to affordable, quality child care that allows them to continue working and contributes to the healthy, social and emotional development of the child. Families can stay connected with the program on the [Child Care Assistance Program Facebook](#) page or at the [IDHS website](#).