



# Department of Public Health and Human Services

Early Childhood & Family Support Division ♦ 1625 11th Avenue ♦ P.O. Box 4210 ♦  
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<https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd>

Greg Gianforte, Governor

Charles T. Brereton, Director

July 1, 2023

On July 1, 2023, the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship Program (BBCCS) is updating its policies to align with HB 648, signed into law by Governor Greg Gianforte in June to expand access to child care, these policy changes increase BBCCS eligibility thresholds, cap copayments, and change the attendance policy. These changes reduce fiscal pressure on families, and better align scholarship payment processes with private pay practices to support providers.

## Eligibility, Sliding Fee Scale & Monthly Copayment

### New Policies Effective 7/1/2023

- Income eligibility increases from 150% of the Federal Poverty Level to 185%.
- A family's monthly copayment is limited to a maximum of 9% of the family's monthly income based on household size. If the family's copayment is above 9%, it will automatically be reduced. An eligibility determination notice will be mailed outlining the lowered copayment effective 7/1/2023.

## Reminders

- The family is responsible for paying their monthly copayment directly to their child care provider. On the monthly invoice, the provider must indicate if the copayment obligation was met.
- If a family has a change in activity (employment, training, or school), they must report the change within 10 calendar days to their Child Care Resource & Referral agency (CCR&R). The CCR&R will help the family evaluate how the change may affect the monthly copayment or eligibility status. Any change to the case would be effective the first of the following month.

## Child Care Program Attendance

### New Policies

- Currently, a child must be in attendance at least 85% of the selected hours each month in order for a child care provider to be paid for that child. Beginning 7/1/2023, a child must attend at least one day each month to be paid the monthly authorized amount. If a child begins attendance after the first of the month, only the days the child is in attendance will be paid. For example, a child may switch providers based on the parent's selection mid-month. In this case, each provider would be paid for the days the child was attending their program.

## Reminders

- Families select their child care provider. The child care provider must be approved to provide care by the Montana Child Care Licensing Program.
- Families determine their child's child care needs, up to 50 hours/week. Care for school-age children is limited to 30 hours/week during the school year.
- Families must report a change in child care provider within one business day to their local (CCR&R). Failure to do so will result in non-payment until the change is reported.
- If a family changes the selected child care hours for a child, the new hours begin the first of the following month.
- Families are responsible for signing children in and out of the child care facility each time they arrive and leave.
- A child care provider must indicate a child's actual attendance on the invoice. A child's time in and time out must be listed daily. If the child is absent, the provider will state "Absent" in the comments section for that day.

For questions, please contact your local [Child Care Resource and Referral Agency](#), or contact Jody Lehman, Child Care Bureau Chief at [joseph.lehman@mt.gov](mailto:joseph.lehman@mt.gov).

### For more information:

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#### Child Care Bureau, Website:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/childcare>

#### Child Care Policy Manual, Website:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/childcare/childcarepolicymanual>

#### Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Website:

<https://dphhs.mt.gov/ecfsd/childcare/childcareresourceandreferral>

#### Provider Portal

<https://webapp.hhs.mt.gov/CCUBSPProviderPortal/>