



New Jersey Cares for Kids Child Care Certificate Program

WHAT IS NJCK?

The New Jersey Cares for Kids (NJCK) Child Care Certificate Program subsidizes child care costs for low and moderate-income families.

- It is administered by state-designated Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) within the framework of state and federal laws and regulations.
- The Office for Children is the CCR&R for Bergen County.
- Receipt of subsidy is dependent on eligibility and availability of funds.
- Families contribute to the cost of child care by making a co-payment, which is based on family size and household income.
- Eligibility child care costs include before and after school care, full-time or part-time care, and summer care.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- The family's gross annual income cannot exceed the maximum set by the state of NJ for the family size.
- All adults in the household must be working or in school full time, with limited exceptions specified by the state of NJ.
- Children under the age of 13 are eligible. Children with special needs are eligible until age 19.

HOW MUCH WILL THE NJCK PROGRAM PAY?

There is a maximum state subsidy rate that varies according to the type of provider, age of the child, and hours of care. Your Parent/Applicant Provider Agreement (PAPA) will clearly state the rate for your subsidy and the portion (co-payment) of the rate that will be paid by you.

Ask your provider about fees. The provider may charge you additional fees if the provider's usual fee is more than the state rate. Additional fees are not part of the

co-payment. Arrangements for payment of additional fees are between the parent and provider and do not affect the parent's eligibility for or receipt of subsidy.

If your provider charges additional fees, ask for a written statement detailing these fees and keep careful records of all payments you make for your co-payment and additional fees.

The NJCK program does not pay registration fees.

CHOOSING CHILD CARE

If you need to find child care, the Office for Children can assist you. Finding the best child care arrangement for your family takes time and effort and we are here to help by providing the tools you need. These are some of the steps to take:

- As soon as you know you may need child care, call the Office for Children at (201) 336-7150. We are open Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- Discuss your child care needs with an Early Childhood Specialist, who will review the different types of care available.
- You will receive referrals to regulated child care providers in your area and information about important things to look for when selecting child care.
- Visit several providers with your child before making a decision.
- Choose the provider who meets your needs. We will continue to assist you until you find the right provider for your child.
- Consider how long the child care arrangement will meet your family's needs. Changing child care providers is hard for children and their parents. Try to choose child care that will work now and in the future.

APPLYING FOR NJCK

1. The first step is to submit an application to the Office for Children. If you need an application, call the Office at (201) 336-7150 and request that an application be mailed to you.
2. Original documentation of income and/or education/training must be provided.
3. You will receive a written acknowledgement when your application is received.
4. If additional information is needed, you will be notified in writing.
5. When your application is complete, you will be advised in writing of your eligibility to receive subsidy.
6. If you are eligible, you may be put on a waiting list until funds are available.

USING THE NJCK CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

When you have been notified that you are eligible for subsidy and funds are available, this is what to expect:

- You will receive a welcome letter and a form that must be completed and returned by the stated due date to notify the Office for Children of your choice of provider.
- When your provider has been approved, you and the provider will receive a Parent/Applicant Provider Agreement (PAPA), with details of the child care payments that have been authorized.
- Your co-payment amount will be stated on the PAPA. You will make this payment to the child care provider, and the Office for Children will pay the balance of the approved rate. Failure to make your co-payment can result in termination of your child care subsidy.
- You must notify the Office for Children promptly of any changes in family size, address, income, work/school information, child care provider or hours of care.
- Eligibility for child care subsidy will be redetermined each year.

WILL THE NJCK PROGRAM PAY MY CHILD CARE PROVIDER?

The following types of providers are eligible to receive payment:

- A New Jersey licensed child care center
- A registered family child care provider
- A New Jersey licensed or regulated after school program
- A regulated summer camp
- A "home approved" provider (relative or friend of the family who is at least 18 years old; the home where the care is provided must pass an inspection by Office for Children).