



Child Care Payment Assistance Fact Sheet

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) provides child care payment assistance to families who are working, in post-secondary education programs, teen parents who are enrolled in high school or those who are participating in the Families First program. Child care payment assistance not only allows parents and guardians a sense of security while they work or pursue educational goals, it also promotes children's learning and development in child care environments. TDHS provides financial assistance with child care costs for families meeting income guideline criteria through several child care assistance programs. Eligibility is re-determined every twelve (12) months.

Types of Child Care Payment Assistance:

Families First participants are eligible to receive child care to assist in completing their approved activity on their Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). Families must be determined eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) by TDHS staff before they can participate in the program.

Transitional Child Care or TCC is available for qualifying families for 18 months following the successful closure of Families First cash assistance. Thirty hours of paid work per week, including self-employment and/or education and training hours must be met to receive TCC.

The **At-Risk Child Care** program serves guardians of Families First child-only cases that are working and/or post-secondary education programs. Child-only guardians are typically grandparents, aunts, or uncles that have care and control of a relative child. Thirty hours of paid work including self-employment and/or education and training hours must be met to receive ARCO.

Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance is available to income eligible families who are working or enrolled in post-secondary education programs. Smart Steps was established to provide child care financial assistance to eligible families with children ages six (6) weeks until kindergarten. The family is not required to receive other benefits through TDHS to qualify.

The **Teen Parent Child Care Program** serves teen parents who are enrolled in and attending high school and who meet income guidelines. Assistance may be available for eligible teens living at home with their parent(s) or those who are emancipated and living independently from their parent(s). Written or verbal communication from school staff that the school's requirements are met is adequate verification for school enrollment.

How to Apply

To apply for services, contact your local Tennessee Department of Human Services Office or Child Care Certificate Program Office in your area. The office locator is available on our website: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/need-help-/tdhs-find-our-offices.html>

Did you know?

Once approved for child care payment assistance the family may choose the type of care their best meets their needs. A child find locator is available to assist families in locating TDHS licensed or DOE approved agencies. This locator is available on our TDHS website: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>



A free, one stop resource for Tennessee families to raise healthy and happy kids.

For More Information:

Web: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/child-care-services.html>

Child Care Complaint Hotline: 1-800-462-8261



Do you need child care assistance to maintain employment or pursue post-secondary education?

You may be eligible for Smart Steps Child Care Payment Assistance if you meet the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be employed no less than 30 hours per week, or be enrolled and attending a post-secondary education program full time or a combination of employment and post-secondary education
- Must have a child between ages six (6) weeks through five (5) years old
- Household gross income must be below the 85th percentile of the State Median Income (SMI) for Tennessee. Please refer to the chart for Household Income Limits below.

Eligibility for assistance is based on program requirements and availability of funding.

Household Income Limits for Smart Steps

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
2	\$3,228
3	\$3,988
4	\$4,805
5	\$5,574
6	\$6,343
7	\$6,487
8	\$6,631

The Smart Steps Application can be found online at:

<http://tn.gov/humanservices/topic/child-care-services>

Once complete, turn the application in to the nearest Tennessee Department of Human Services Child Care Office, found online at:

<http://tn.gov/humanservices/article/child-care-certificate-program-office-locator>

Find a child care center near you at:

<http://www.tn.gov/humanservices/topic/child-care-services>