



Child Care Financial Aid Policies 2026-2027

Who Can Get Child Care Financial Aid?

You may qualify if:

- You live in **Mecklenburg County, NC.**
 - Your child is a **U.S. citizen or legal non-citizen.**
 - Your family income is below the program limits.
 - You are:
 - Working at least **30 hours per week**, OR
 - Attending school/training, OR
 - Participating in Work First Employment Services.
-

Work Requirements

To qualify through employment for full-time services:

- You must work an average of **30 hours per week.**
 - You must provide proof of employment (such as pay stubs).
 - Self-employed parents must provide tax returns or other proof of income.
 - New self-employed parents have up to **12 months** to provide documentation showing their business is established.
-

School Requirements

You may qualify if you are enrolled in:

High School

- Attend at least **16 hours per week.**
- Provide proof of enrollment.

GED Program

- Attend at least **16 hours per week.**
- Provide proof of enrollment.

College or Other Postsecondary Education

- Attend at least **20 hours per week**.
- Provide proof of enrollment.
- Child care assistance is limited to a **lifetime maximum of 20 months** for postsecondary education.
- Graduate and postgraduate programs are **not eligible**.
- Online students must provide proof of enrollment and participation requirements including hours of participation.

You can also qualify through a combination of work and school totaling at least **30 hours per week**.

Reporting Changes

You must notify CCRI within **10 business days** if:

- Your address, phone number, or email changes.
- The child receiving services no longer lives with you.
- Your income increases above program limits.
- You lose your job.
- You stop attending school or complete your program.
- You change child care providers.
- You no longer need child care services.

Failure to report changes may result in loss of benefits or repayment of funds and permanent disqualification from the subsidy program.

Choosing a Child Care Provider

- Funding must be available before a voucher can be issued.
 - Some funding requires that the program be a four- or five-star facility for enrollment.
 - Your child must attend a licensed provider that participates in the state's payment system.
 - You must sign and return your voucher before services can begin.
 - The child care program must accept the voucher in the NC FAST system or return the County funded voucher to CCRI for payment to begin.
-

Parent Fees

- Parents pay a monthly fee based on approximately **10% of countable gross income**.
- Fees are paid directly to the child care provider.
- You must pay your fee even when your child is absent.
- Unpaid fees must be cleared before transferring providers or re-entering the program.

Other Costs You May Owe

You may also have to pay:

- Registration fees
 - Activity fees
 - Transportation fees
 - Late pickup fees
 - Any amount charged by a provider above the subsidy rate
-

Authorized Child Care Hours

Care Type	Hours Per Week
Full-Time	32–55 hours
Three-Quarter Time	18–31 hours
Part-Time	Less than 18 hours

Your approved child care hours must match your work or school schedule along with consideration of the hours your child may attend another program and hours of operation of the child care program you choose.

Changing Child Care Providers

If you want to switch providers:

- Contact your CCFA Navigator.
 - Give at least **10 working days' notice**.
 - Pay any outstanding parent fees.
 - Obtain a new voucher before enrolling at the new provider.
-

Annual Recertification

Every year you must renew your eligibility.

- A renewal packet is mailed about **45 days before your certification expires.**
- Complete and return all required forms and documentation before the deadline.
- Late packets are not accepted and are considered **late after 5:00pm on the last business day of the month your certification expires.**
- Missing the deadline will result in termination of services.

Helpful tip: Return paperwork by the **17th of the expiration month** whenever possible.

When Services May End

Services may end if:

- You no longer qualify.
- You fail to report required changes.
- You fail to complete annual recertification.
- You move out of Mecklenburg County without arranging a transfer.
- You voluntarily stop services.

CCRI will send written notice if benefits are terminated.

Waiting List

You may be placed on a waiting list if:

- You want to add another child to the program.
- Funding is unavailable.
- Your services ended and you later reapply.

When funding becomes available, CCRI will contact you by email.

Contact Information

CCRI Child Care Financial Aid Department

- Phone: 704-335-9438
- Email: subsidy@childcareresourcesinc.org

For child care complaints or licensing concerns:

- North Carolina Division of Child Development and Early Education
- 1-800-859-0829

Key Takeaways

1. Work, school, or approved training is generally required.
2. Report changes within 10 business days.
3. Pay your parent fee every month.
4. Complete annual recertification on time.
5. Keep your contact information updated so you don't miss important notices.

Initial Income Eligibility Limits
State, Smart Start of Mecklenburg County &
Mecklenburg County Waitlist Reduction Initiative Child Care Subsidy

**Maximum Gross Monthly Income Eligibility Limits and Fee Percentages for Subsidized Child
 Care Service**
Effective Oct. 1, 2026

200% Federal Poverty Level
(Children ages 0-5 and children ages 6-12 with documented special needs)

Parent Co-Payment: 10%												
Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Maximum Gross Monthly Income	\$2,660	\$3,607	\$4,553	\$5,500	\$6,447	\$7,393	\$8,340	\$9,287	\$10,233	\$11,180	\$12,127	\$13,073

133% Federal Poverty Level
(Children ages 6-12)

Parent Co-Payment: 10%												
Family Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Maximum Gross Monthly Income	\$1,769	\$2,398	\$3,028	\$3,658	\$4,287	\$4,917	\$5,546	\$6,176	\$6,805	\$7,435	\$8,064	\$8,694

