

OVERVIEW - BEST BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIPS

CHILD CARE 1-7

Parent Eligibility - Overview

Supersedes: Child Care 1-9 (2/1/11)

References: Sections 52-2-701-704, 52-2-711-713, 53-4-610 MCA;
Sections 37.80.101-103, 37.80.201-202, 37.80.205-206, 37.80.301-302,
37.80.305 -306, 37.80.315-316, 37.80.501 ARM

General Rule

Eligible parents must meet the following requirements:

- Income that falls within the standard sliding fee scale for their family size;
- Need child care in order to work, work and attend school, attend school full-time, or participate in Employability/Service Plan activities;
- If an absent parent exists, meet child support requirement outlined in Policy Section 2-2a.
- Meet minimum activity requirements and display a need for child care to meet the participation requirements based on family size, composition, and circumstance.

A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is not available for parents to care for their own children. Parents may not concurrently care for each other's children to obtain a child care scholarship.

US Citizenship

US Citizenship is not required for the parent.

Montana Residency

The child and the parent must be living together in Montana. Refer to Child Eligibility in [Policy Section 1-6](#) for Montana residency requirements

Parent – Overview of Eligibility Categories

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services [DPHHS] Early Childhood Services Bureau [ECSB] provides Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships for parents participating in the following programs:

1. Families who meet activity requirements and have income that falls within the sliding fee scale [Non-TANF].
2. Families who receive TANF Cash Assistance and are participating in Employability/Service Plan activities requiring child care.
3. Eligible tribal families, if they are not being served by their Tribal Child Care and Development Fund [CCDF] program.
4. Families participating in a Tribal TANF program, if their Tribal CCDF program is not serving them.

Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services

5. Referrals from Child and Family Services[CFSD] for children in need of child care because the children are in danger of abuse or neglect.

Tribal Families Dual Eligibility

Tribal families are dually eligible for Child Care and Development Fund [CCDF], to support coordination of the two programs and services, families must provide written confirmation that they are not being served by their Tribal CCDF program.

Non-TANF Parent Overview- See Section 2 for Details

Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships for low-income families whose income falls below 150% of the determined federal poverty guidelines:

1. Low-income working families must meet activity requirements. Refer to Policy Section 2-3.

Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are provided for employment time and attending school or training. Note: Disabled parents who are not able to care for their children are not included when determining the minimum hourly work requirement for the family.
2. Disabled parents who work, but are not able to meet the minimum hourly work requirement each month, may be eligible for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship only during employment time. In a two parent household, if one parent is disabled and unable to work, the remaining parent must meet the single parent work requirement.
3. Low-income teen parents (through age 19) attending high school, HiSET or an equivalency program do not have a minimum work requirement.
 - o A child care scholarship is provided for out-of-home classroom time and employment hours.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] Cash Assistance Parents Overview

The Offices of Public Assistance [OPA] determine eligibility for families seeking Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF]:Parent receiving TANF Cash assistance may receive a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship for Employability/Service Plan activities, which require child care.

Tribal TANF Parents

Montana's Child Care and Development Fund [CCDF] State Plan supports all TANF parents in the state. Both Tribal and Montana TANF families can receive child support of Employability/Service Plan activities. If a Tribal TANF family finds out they are not eligible for Tribal CCDF benefits or the Tribal CCDF is not available, the family can apply for the Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship [BCCS]. There must be written verification from the Tribal CCDF that the family cannot be served before BCCS will be approved. Refer to Policy Section 3-2.

Child and Family Services Division [CFSD] Child Care

The Child and Family Services Division will refer children to the Best Beginning Child Care Scholarship. There are no eligibility requirements for parents for children referred by CFSD.