

NON-TANF CHILD CARE ELIGIBILITY
CHILD CARE 2 - 2
Household Requirements

Supersedes: Child Care 2-2 (9/30/16)

References: 52-2-701 - 704 & 52-2-711 - 713 MCA
Sections 37.78.215 (3), 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
45 CFR Part 98.20 – 4

General Rule

Non-TANF Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarships are available to families who work and/or attend school, and to teen parents attending high school or equivalency programs, whose gross income does not exceed the standard Sliding Fee Scale.

Parents must demonstrate a need for child care and must meet activity hour requirements. In addition, the following also apply:

- ❑ A Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is not available for parents to care for their own children.
- ❑ If a parent is available to care for the child, there is no need for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship. However, a need may still exist if the available parent is unable to provide suitable care for the child[ren].
- ❑ If child care is available at no cost, there is no need for a Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship.
- ❑ If child care is available to the parent at a reduced cost, the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is based on the out-of-pocket expenses incurred by the parent.
- ❑ Parents of separate families may not concurrently care for each other's children to obtain a child care scholarship.

See Section Policy 2-2a for policy on Child Support.

Household Membership

Eligibility is based on the income and activities of Non-TANF household members. Individuals living in the child's home may be 'required household members' or 'optional household members,' depending upon their relationship to the child[ren] for whom a scholarship is requested.

If the family chooses to include an optional household member, all eligibility requirements apply to the optional household member. Once the family elects to include an optional member individual, the optional member may not be removed from the eligibility household, unless the individual physically leaves the home.

Required

Required Household Members, as related to the child(ren) for whom a scholarship is requested:

- Biological, adoptive parent or stepparent of an intact family, regardless of living arrangements. This would include incarcerated parents or parents working and living out of town.
- Parent by common law marriage;
- Parent joined by a common child;
- Adult acting in loco parentis;
- Minor sibling[s], age 17 and under, including stepbrother, stepsister, half brother and half sister;
- Child receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] Cash benefits, or other subsidy, as a member of the household.

Optional

Optional Household Members; Once the family elects to include an optional household member, the optional member may not be removed from the eligibility household unless the individual physically leaves the home. As related to the child[ren] for whom a scholarship is requested:

- Adult Sibling, age 18 and over [no Child Support Enforcement Division [CSED] requirement];
- Aunt or Uncle;
- Grandparent;
- Great Grandparent;
- Parent's Significant Other.

Generally Excluded

Generally Excluded Household Members, as related to the child[ren] for whom a scholarship is requested:

- Absent biological adoptive parent or stepparent is generally excluded. If an absent parent maintains parental rights, child support requirements apply.
- Exchange Students.

Corroborative information such as rent receipts or lease agreements can be used by the eligibility specialist should there be a question on household membership

Joint Custody Arrangements/ Shared Custody

Parents whether separated or divorced who live apart and divide residential time with their children may each apply for Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship regardless of the percentage of time the child lives with each parent. Child support compliance must still be verified either by a compliance with the Department of Public Health and Human Services [DPHHS] Child Support Enforcement [CSED] or a court filed, judge signed parenting plan. A self-statement from the applying parent is sufficient to determine custody of the child.

Prospecting a Temporary Household

Prospected absences, such as a change in residence for a child during the summer months, will be considered in determining the Authorization of Services for children in the household.

Anticipating Changes

If the parent anticipates changes in household membership or changes in the reason for child care the Authorization of Services can be adjusted to meet child care needs.

Homelessness

Assistance may be provided to individuals. The individual must declare his/her intent to reside in Montana and meet the definition for homelessness. Homelessness does not mean a home does not exist for purposes of determining whether a child lives with a specified relative in a setting maintained as a home.

We may provide child care assistance to help families when the family meets the following criteria:

- a. Referral by a recognized agency known to work with homeless populations. The family must present a referral for child care assistance from an agency known by the local office to be an agency that works with homeless families, including shelters for abused women and children, verifying that the family needs child care to resolve an emergency crisis. This referral will serve as proof of their homeless state. Local offices will define recognized homeless agencies in their area.
- b. If there is not a local agency as identified in a. above, two [2] letters of referral are necessary from other local groups that work with homeless populations.
- c. If the family has no affiliation with local organizations, then two [2] collateral contacts from individuals can be used to verify the family's living location. However, this documentation must be used to verify living arrangements only.
- d. An exemption of the residency requirement will be granted until the family establishes a permanent address.

A family that reports homeless status is eligible for 90 calendar days of eligibility to meet all Non-TANF requirements.