

How the Program Works

I have applied. Now what happens?

When your application is processed, you will be given:

1. A list of potential child care providers. You can begin the process of selecting the right child care provider for you and your children. Hamilton County has contracts with over 370 licensed child care centers and about 1,025 certified child care homes to choose from. If you want to use a child care provider who does not have a contract with Hamilton County, let us know. We will attempt to certify any interested home provider.

*(For more information on how to select a provider see the fact sheet **How to Choose a Child Care Provider.**)*

2. Either a child care Voucher, Notice of Potential Eligibility (temporary voucher) or a Denial Notice.

A child care Voucher is given to your child care provider on the first day of care. It lets the provider know that you are eligible for services and ensures your child care costs will be paid. **Please note: a provider can deny service if you bring your child without a voucher.**

The Notice of Potential Eligibility allows you to get child care while Hamilton County Child Care Services waits for you to provide all the information necessary to complete your application. You must supply that information to your Consumer Specialist within 30 days or your application will be denied. For more information see the fact sheet: Potential Eligibility.

A Denial Notice officially informs you that you are not eligible for the program.

What is a voucher?

A voucher is a three-part document mailed to you every two weeks. You receive one for each child in a separate envelope. A voucher is like a check to pay for part of your child care cost. You pay the rest. The amount you pay depends on your income and family size. A voucher sample is provided at the end of this fact sheet.

How do I use a voucher?

1. Each time you receive your voucher, check each of the following items for accuracy:
 - the days and hours you are authorized to receive child care services
 - the child's name. You will receive a separate voucher for each child in care
 - the period of time the voucher pays for your child care costs (usually for two weeks)
 - the child care fees you are responsible for paying directly to the provider.
2. Your voucher is a three-part form. Give copies A and B to your provider on the first day of care. Keep copy C for your records. Do not give your voucher to a provider before the first day of care or if your child is not returning to that provider. **You must bring your voucher on the first day of care.**
3. If you use a home provider or a center... Your provider records the days and hours your child is in care on the voucher. At the end of the voucher period, check your provider's attendance on the voucher. Make sure it is accurate. (Your provider can bill for days your child was scheduled but absent.) Then sign and date the voucher.

How does my provider actually get paid?

Your provider receives payment from two sources:

1. Subsidized Child Care
On the first day of care, your provider must call and validate your voucher to receive payment. At the end of the voucher period, the provider sends your voucher to HCJFS. Approximately two weeks later your provider receives a check. **You must take the voucher to your provider on the first day of care.**
2. Your Child Care Fees
Your fee per child is listed on the voucher after the words "Consumer Fee Per Day".

You are responsible for paying the weekly fee to your provider on time. The amount you have to pay is based on your income and family size. Each provider establishes a fee payment policy. Be sure to discuss these payment policies with your provider.

You should request a receipt for your fees. If you do not pay the fee on time, the provider can refuse to care for your children and your child care case can be closed. If you lose your child care because of nonpayment of fees, you will not be allowed to receive child care until you pay the fees or your Consumer Specialist receives a payment plan approved by the provider.

What if I lose my voucher, don't receive it, or it is stolen?

You should receive your voucher about four days before the voucher period. Wait at least two days before assuming it is lost. Once you have determined the voucher is lost or stolen, call your Consumer Specialist immediately. Your voucher will be cancelled and a replacement voucher issued. Let your provider know you have a replacement voucher. If you find the original voucher, or if the provider finds it, **do not use it**. Throw it away. Only use the replacement voucher.

To avoid lost or delayed vouchers:

- Make sure your name is listed on your mail box.
- Report a change of address immediately to your Consumer Specialist.

What if my child will be absent from child care?

- Let your provider know your work schedule each week.
- Let your provider know your child will be absent as soon as possible. **Failure to do so after 3 days could result in termination of care with that provider.**
- If your child is absent for 3 days in a row contact your Consumer Specialist immediately and explain why your child is absent.
- You are responsible for paying your fee even if your child is absent.

If your child is absent ten days or less in a six month period your child care costs will be paid as usual. You only get 10 days per child, regardless of how many providers you use in the six-month period.

If your child is absent more than ten days in a six month period you may be required to pay the full cost of care for any additional absent days. Absent days are tracked for each child. So if you have two children in care, each child can have up to 10 absent days. The six month periods for tracking absent days are fixed. The first period runs January 1 through June 30. The second period runs from July 1 to December 31. Your provider may stop your care for excessive absences.

Why do I have to reapply every 12 months?

The State requires your case eligibility to be reviewed every twelve months and when there is a change in your case.