



**National Park Service (NPS)  
Child Care Subsidy (CCS)  
Employee/Family Handbook**

**National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program  
Employee/Family Handbook**

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*(\*This page must be completed, signed and returned to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Program to activate your National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy Program Benefit)*

### **How to contact us:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Child Care Subsidy Administration Program  
2300 Main Street – 2SE  
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# National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program Employee/Family Handbook

## Introduction

The National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy Program provides a contribution toward the total cost of child care for Eligible NPS Employees. The benefit was created to assist NPS Employees whose children attend licensed, registered and/or accredited child care programs. Providers and Parents must apply for benefits via the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program as the 3rd party administrator for the NPS. The Family portion of child care costs plus the amount of the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program Benefits will equal the provider rate. Eligibility will be determined based on the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidance and may be updated at any time throughout the year per the discretion of the NPS.

- The NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit is available to income qualified employees. ***Contractors working for the NPS do not qualify.***
- Families may qualify for subsidy benefits in accordance with the NPS Child Care Program Child Care Subsidy Benefit Table. The subsidy benefit is based on the Employee's Total Family Income (TFI) which includes Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) and may include business income, rental income, and/or any other recurring income as listed on the most recent federal tax information.
- Eligibility to receive benefits can only be determined once all documents are submitted for review.
- Eligibility will be determined based upon the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidelines.
- NPS Program guidelines may be updated at any time throughout the year per the discretion of the NPS and will be communicated to the USDA for implementation.

## NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit Program Overview

The intent of the NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit Program is to help meet the needs of eligible Families where the spouse/partner is working and/or attending school. Employees must use a licensed and/or accredited child care provider in order to be deemed eligible for benefits. NPS Child Care Subsidy benefits are calculated based upon the child's attendance to include hourly care, daily care, weekly care, and monthly care with benefits being paid directly to the qualifying provider on a monthly basis on or after the 15th of the month for the current month of care.

## Eligibility Requirements for NPS Families

- NPS Employees who meet the income guidelines as set forth by the NPS. Contractors are not eligible for benefits.
- The Employee's Spouse/Partner must be working, attending school, or actively seeking employment.
- Employee and must be listed on the Employee's Federal Tax Return in order to qualify for benefits under this program.
- The benefit is available for children from birth through 12 years of age.
- Child Care Provider must be used for the care of the Employee's child.

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- NPS Child Care Subsidy program requires that the Child Care Provider be licensed, regulated, and/or accredited in order to be considered a qualifying Child Care Provider.
- Family/child resides is not authorized under the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidelines.

### **Program Responsibilities:**

Once you determine that you may qualify for benefits based upon the criteria above, you may apply for a NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit. Please be aware that there are responsibilities that you, your Child Care Provider, the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program, and the NPS have once this process begins. These responsibilities are to ensure that NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit Program guidelines are adhered to based upon the intent of the program.

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

1. The Employee/Family will be financially responsible for all child care costs until their application for child care subsidy benefits has been approved and the Employee and their Child Care Provider have received their NPS Child Care Subsidy Program Benefit Letter.
2. Complete the application process ensuring that all required forms have been submitted to the USDA in order to determine eligibility.
3. Employees will receive two notifications from the USDA requesting the additional or missing documents.
4. Employees will have 30 days to complete the application process, failure to provide all requested information will result in your application for Child Care benefits being declined.
5. Meet program guidelines and use a qualifying Child Care Provider.
6. Sign the NPS Invoice/Attendance form each and every month to request payment.
7. Pay the Family portion of child care costs directly to the Provider including any additional charges for services that you may incur including field trips, non-essential supplies, late fees, etc.
8. Report any change to your child care needs immediately to the program administrator (USDA) and your child care provider.
9. Report immediately to the USDA a change to any of the following:
  - Your Family's size, such as someone moving in or out of the household
  - Work, training, or education schedule
  - Your Family's address or telephone number (work and home)
  - Any change in marital status
10. Make payment arrangements for child care needed for personal reasons that are not authorized.
11. Ensure that Child Care Providers used while participating in the NPS Child Care Program are promptly paid for all child care services rendered. Failure to pay the required Employee portion to any Child Care Provider may result in the Employee being disqualified from the program for one year.

### **Provider Responsibilities:**

1. All providers must meet the NPS child care licensing and accreditation requirements for the type of child care business they operate under the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program. The following types of child care programs are accepted under the NPS Program guidelines:

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### **Family Child Care:**

Family child care is home-based care provided for a portion of the day in a private family home for compensation on a regular, ongoing basis and must be inhabited by the family/individual that is providing care. States limit the provider's hours of operation and number of children who can be cared for in a home environment. Family child care providers must be licensed by the state and the care providers must have basic training in first aid, safety, and child care including child abuse and neglect prevention. Many in-home providers also have training in early education.

### **Center Based Child Care:**

Commercial child care centers/day care centers provide child care in a group setting for a set number of hours and provide standardized and regulated care. There are planned educational activities and children may be grouped by age or placed in mixed age groupings. Day care centers are licensed to provide care for infants, toddlers, and/or pre-school age and they are usually open all day. Classes are usually largest in this type of care; ratios of children to adult caregivers will vary according to state licensing requirements.

### **Federal Based Child Care:**

Some Federal agencies sponsor on-site child care centers for their employees and families seeking to use this type of child care. The space at federal child care centers may be available to non-federal employees; however, priority for child care services will be given to federal employees.

2. Meet program rules and requirements in order to receive a NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit.
3. Keep complete and accurate attendance records according to licensing and accreditation regulations and/or contract requirements. Maintain records for future reference as needed.
4. Bill for the NPS Child Care Subsidy using the directions and invoice/attendance form as provided.
5. Submit to the program administrator (USDA), any changes/updates to status as a licensed and/or accredited child care provider.
6. Provide timely notification if/when a NPS Employee's child or children have left care.
7. Provide timely notification if/when a NPS Employee's child's rate and/or attendance changes.
8. Must submit Invoice & Attendance records to the USDA that are properly completed and signed by the Employee, Spouse or POA; and a representative of the child care center for payment. Invoices not properly completed and submitted to the USDA within 3 months of the period of service, will be considered void and will not be honored for payment.

### **USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program Responsibilities as the Third Party Administrator:**

1. Determine a Family's eligibility for child care subsidies based upon NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidance and benefit tables.
2. Authorize benefits based on the amount of child care needed by eligible Families for approved child care.
3. Pay Providers for authorized and billed child care services provided to an eligible Family.
4. Inform Families and providers of NPS Child Care Subsidy Program updates as applicable. (E.g. Start/end date, payments, notifications of expired documents, etc.)

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5. Assess and resolve overpayments and underpayments.
6. Answer questions related to eligibility, authorizations, and payments.
7. Will inform the Employee within 10 days of the receipt of a Family's application that their application has been accepted. If the application is incomplete, the USDA will inform the Employee of the information/documents needed in order to complete the application process.

### **National Park Service Responsibilities:**

1. Develop operational guidance for the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program and ensure that the USDA has the most current guidance and applicable policies.
2. Ensure that the USDA, as the third party program administrator, follows all established guidelines as set forth by the NPS.
3. Perform audits on records and files ensuring proper documentation is maintained in accordance with established operational guidance.

### **Child Care Qualifications: Full Time vs. Part Time**

The child/children's attendance will determine the calculation of benefits as full time or part time with the Family being responsible for any balance above the authorized benefit. The type of care will be evaluated to determine the amount of NPS Child Care Subsidy benefits that the Employee will be eligible to receive.

### **National Park Service Child Care Subsidy Benefit Determination**

#### **Important Facts**

The NPS will provide a Fee Category Table/Child Care Subsidy Calculation Table which includes the Total Family Income Fee Category, Minimum Employee Portion, and Maximum Benefit allowed per child. Based upon the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidelines, benefits may be available for all legal dependents from birth through 12 years of age of the qualifying NPS Employee.

- Both Parents and Providers must remain eligible for the NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit in order to receive payment.
- The amount listed on the NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit Authorization Letter is the amount that will be paid each month directly to the Child Care Provider. If the family terminates child care and/or switches to a new child care provider, the monthly NPS child care subsidy benefit is pro-rated. In either case, the Employee/family is responsible for any remaining balance.
- Providers may submit **one rate** change per year and will be required to notify the USDA at least 15 days prior to the effective date of the change. Failure to promptly report updates and/or changes to your child care rates may result in an over or underpayment. Additional rates changes not associated with an attendance change or when the child ages up will not be processed.
- During summer months, school-age child care rates may change based upon attendance, at which time the benefit will be recalculated.

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- Child care rates submitted as a weekly rate will be set up under the 4 & 5 Week billing method.
- The NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit will **NOT** pay fees for:
  - Months in which no care occurs
  - Lateness/Tardiness
  - Transportation
  - Field trips
  - Food
  - Any other miscellaneous fees
  - Tuition for part-day kindergarten and/or elementary education
- NPS Child Care Subsidy benefits will not be made to more than one Child Care Provider for the same child/children for the same hours of care.
- All child care payments are made directly to the Child Care Provider. Payments are made within seven (7) to ten (10) business days from verification of a complete and accurate attendance record.
- Invoices must be properly completed, signed and submitted to the USDA within 90 days/3 months of the Period of Service end date in order to payment to be issued. Invoices received outside of this timeframe will be deemed void and payment will not be issued on behalf of the Employee resulting in the Employee being financially responsible for all child care costs associated with missing invoices.
- NPS Employees must ensure that their provider submits invoices in a timely manner in order for payment to be issued on their behalf. Invoices may be submitted by the Provider or the Employee directly to the USDA for payment.
- Under no circumstances will child care payments be made to the Family. Families are required to make clear and concise arrangements with their Child Care Provider related to account credits or reimbursements.
- Child Care Providers will only be paid for child/children listed on the NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit Authorization Letter. If the family adds a child or children to the program after their original authorization date, they must submit information for program benefit recalculation.

### **Registration and Supply Fees**

Providers may be paid for Enrollment, Registration and/or Supply Fees as billed to the Family for each child enrolled in the program by submitting an invoice to the USDA for the fee. Fees will only be paid upon receipt of a properly completed invoice.

### **Payment Process**

Payments are issued directly to the Family's Child Care Provider. Each Provider will receive a NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit Invoice & Attendance Form for each child that qualifies for NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit. Per NPS guidance, each Invoice & Attendance Form submitted to the USDA for payment must be properly completed and must include the signature of a

## National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program Employee/Family Handbook

qualifying Child Care Provider program official along with the Employee, the Employee's Spouse, or the Employee's Power of Attorney. Each invoice must contain a valid employee signature, photo copies will not accepted for payment.

Please note that if a Power of Attorney (POA) is signing the form on behalf of the Employee, the program administrator (USDA) must have a copy of the most current POA in order to process for payment.

National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy Program Invoice & Attendance Form																			
<b>Provider:</b>		ABC DAYCARE																	
<b>Address:</b>		123 MAIN STREET ANYWHERE, USA 12345																	
Remit to Address:		123 MAIN STREET ANYWHERE, USA 12345																	
Email address:		ABCDAYCARE@MAIL.COM																	
<b>Tax ID #</b>		987654321&00001																	
<b>Phone #</b>		(900) 555-1234								<b>Fax #</b> (900) 555-5678									
<b>Employee Name</b>		JOE SMITH																	
<b>Child Name</b>		SUZY SMITH																	
<b>Month of Service</b>																			
Attendance & Billing Record:																			
To complete the attendance record, place an "X" for each day of care provided or day that the family will be billed, "NC" for NO CHARGE or "T" if service was TERMINATED																			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15					
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				
Employee/Family Annual Recertification Date: Saturday, January 01, 1900																			
<b>Current Child Care Cost Billing</b>								Approved NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit											
<b>Total Cost \$</b>								Total Monthly Cost \$500.00											
Less Employee/Family Portion \$ _____								Total Employee/Family Portion \$325.00											
<b>NPS Balance Due \$</b>								NPS Portion \$175.00											
<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;"><b>Provider Signature</b> _____</td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Employee Signature</b> _____</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>																<b>Provider Signature</b> _____		<b>Employee Signature</b> _____	
<b>Provider Signature</b> _____																			
<b>Employee Signature</b> _____																			
Return completed Invoice & Attendance Form via any of the following:																			
Fax: (816) 823-5458				Mail: General Services Administration / Attention: Child Care															
Email: npschildcare@gsa.gov				2300 Main St - 25E															
Questions: (866) 508-0371				Kansas City, MO 64108															
NPS 2012-02																			

**Example of a National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program Invoice & Attendance Record issued by the GSA Subsidy Administration Section to a qualifying Child Care Provider to bill for their services.**

Please see below a sample NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit Invoice & Attendance Form which provides instructions on the completion of the form. All Invoice & Attendance Forms must be submitted to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program within 90 days/3 months of the period of service that child care was provided.

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**National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy Program  
Invoice & Attendance Form**

**Provider:** ABC DAYCARE  
**Address:** 123 MAIN STREET  
 ANYWHERE, USA 12345  
Remit to Address: 123 MAIN STREET ANYWHERE, USA 12345  
 Email address: ABCDAYCARE@MAIL.COM

**Tax ID #** 987654321&00001  
**Phone #** (900) 555-1234 **Fax #** (900) 555-5678

**Employee Name** JOE SMITH  
**Child Name** SUZY SMITH  
**Month of Service** January 1 - 31, 2016

**Attendance & Billing Record:**  
To complete the attendance record, place an "X" for each day of care provided or day that the family will be billed, "NC" for NO CHARGE or "T" if service was TERMINATED

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	

Employee/Family Annual Recertification Date: Saturday, January 00, 1900

**Current Child Care Cost Billing**

**Total Cost \$** 500.00

**Less Employee/Family Portion \$** 325.00

**GSA Balance Due \$** 175.00

Approved NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit

Total Monthly Cost: \$500.00

Total Employee/Family Portion: \$325.00

NPS Portion: \$175.00

**Provider Signature** *Suzie Daycare Provider*

**Employee Signature** *John Smith*

Return completed Invoice & Attendance Form via any of the following:

Fac: (816) 823-5498      Mail: General Services Administration / Attention: Child Care

Email: npschildscare@gsa.gov      2300 Main St - 25E

Questions: (866) 508-0371      Kansas City, MO 64108

Your Provider will complete the following:

Month and Year of Service

Attendance & Billing Record

Total Cost *they are charging you for their child care services*

Less Employee/Family Portion *which is the amount you are required to pay*

NPS Balance Due *Total Cost less your Employee/Family Portion*

Provider Signature

You as the qualifying Employee will sign the Invoice & Attendance Form certifying that all information is correct and that you have paid directly to the Child Care Provider, your Employee/Family Portion

By signing and certifying the invoice for payment, the Child Care Provider and Employee attest that the total cost written on the form is actual amount of child care costs billed to their Family for the period of service indicated and that you have paid or have made payment arrangements for the Employee portion as listed on the invoice.

***Please note that Employees are required to pay the Employee portion as listed on their benefit letter and invoice prior to any benefits being issued to your provider on their behalf.***

***Invoices containing "NC" within the Attendance & Billing Record will be prorated and paid based upon the attendance as listed. Qualifying NPS Employees need to ensure that the invoice correctly reflects the proper attendance in order for their NPS Subsidy Benefit to be properly paid.***

## **National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program Employee/Family Handbook**

### **Billing Errors**

Billing errors may cause an underpayment or an overpayment. The Parent and Child Care Provider are required to provide correct information in relation to the NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit received. If the Provider was to receive an overpayment of NPS Child Care Subsidy benefits, a refund or offset of the amount of the overpayment would be due. Any overpayments, including those due to a USDA/NPS error, must be reported immediately to the Family's assigned Agency Representative.

If the USDA determines that an overpayment was issued, an audit of the Employee's file will be performed to validate the payments issued. The Child Care Provider or Family will receive an official notification which may include a request that funds be returned for further credit to the NPS or that future invoices will be offset (maximum offset period allowed is 90 days).

The USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program is responsible to collect erroneous payments made to Child Care Providers for the following reasons which include but are not limited to:

- Erroneous or false information regarding eligibility or care provided
- Duplicate payments or payments made for services not rendered
- Payments made for ineligible providers or families

The USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program will make reasonable efforts to collect overpayments making a minimum of three notifications to providers and Families. Failure by the provider and/or Family to return any requested overpayment/erroneous payment will result in a federal debt being established to collect the monies. For Family's that incur an overpayment due to incorrect information provided in order to calculate the benefit or a change in the Family status that affects their eligibility, the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program will provide documentation to the NPS Child Care Program Child Care Subsidy Program for review and action. The USDA will act on behalf of the NPS Child Care Program for all financial decisions pertaining to child care subsidy payments issued.

Families or providers who give erroneous or false information may be permanently disqualified from participating in the NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit programs upon approval of the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program Manager.

### **Payment Reconciliation**

Families are required to pay their portion of the total child care costs directly to their Child Care Provider. Neither the USDA, nor the NPS, has any responsibility for ensuring that the Family pays their portion. Failure by Families to pay their portion of child care costs may result in discontinued NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit. In addition, failure by the Child Care Providers to reimburse Families or credit their account for NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit received may result in disqualification from the program and repayment of funds.

## National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Program Statement of Understanding

- Families are financially responsible for all child care costs until a National Park Service (NPS) Child Care Subsidy Benefit has been awarded and accepted by both the Employee and Child Care Provider.
- Families are eligible for the NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit only if/when their application has been approved. The Employee's Eligibility/Benefit Effective Date will be the first of the month in which the Employee applies or the child/children's first day in child care, whichever is the latest of the two dates.
- You must be in an Employee of the National Park Service in order to be eligible to receive benefits under NPS Child Care Subsidy Program. Any change in your employment status with the NPS must be reported to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program immediately for further review. National Park Service families participating in other subsidy benefit programs may be eligible for a NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit; however the benefit is calculated after these discounts have been applied to the standard rate. Contractors for the NPS are not eligible.
- As a participant in the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program, you agree to provide any and all information requested by the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program and/or the NPS related to your application, payments issued on your behalf, eligibility, and the child care costs charged to you by your provider. The submission of this information will be used in order to determine eligibility in the program. Failure to provide requested information within 30 days of the day of the request will result in your removal from the program and you will be responsible for all child care costs.
- You must notify the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program if and when your child is no longer enrolled with the Approved Child Care Provider identified on your application. The subsidy is not transferable to another child care provider. You must reapply for the subsidy should you change child care arrangements.
- Due to the variation of oversight and regulation in different states and the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidelines, the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program reserves the right to determine which types of Child Care Providers in each state meet the minimum eligibility requirements for participation in NPS Child Care Subsidy Program. If your Child Care Provider's standing with their state child care licensing authority changes or is revoked, this information must be reported to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program immediately.
- You are responsible for reporting any changes that may affect your status as a NPS Child Care Subsidy recipient, or your families cost for any reason to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program as soon it has been identified. Including but not limited to; changes in your personal and/or financial situation, or that of your Spouse/Partner; such as but not limited to any change in employment, school enrollment, marriage, divorce, a partner who has entered or left the home, etc. Failure to promptly report any change to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program that causes an erroneous payment on your behalf may result in your Child Care Subsidy Benefit being terminated and subsequent collection action of the erroneous payment from you.
- Any program policy infraction to include but not limited to providing incorrect child care cost, knowingly or unknowingly which causes an overpayment of a NPS Child Care Subsidy benefit may result in you being disqualified from the program. In addition, repayment of monies received due to this misrepresentation will be required by the Provider and/or Employee.
- Invoices submitted to the USDA for payment must contain an original signature from the Employee. Photo copies of an invoice containing the Employee's signature will not be accepted by the USDA for payment. Invoices must be submitted to the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program on a monthly basis in order for the NPS Child Care Subsidy Benefit to be paid. Invoices must be properly completed, signed by both Employee and Provider, and submitted to the USDA within 90 days of the period of service in order for payment to be issued. Invoices submitted after 90 days following the end of the period of service will not be eligible for payment resulting in the Employee being financially responsible for the child care cost incurred for that period of service.

**By completing the application process through the USDA Child Care Subsidy Administration Program, I attest that I received, read and understand the NPS Child Care Subsidy Program guidelines as set forth in the handbook.**

**Printed Name of NPS Employee** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of Qualifying NPS Employee** \_\_\_\_\_ **Last 4 of SSN** \_\_\_\_\_

*Parents who misrepresent information used to calculate their subsidy benefit may have their subsidy benefit terminated and be financially responsible for repayment of any Child Care Subsidy Benefits issued on his/her behalf due to incomplete, inaccurate information used in the calculation of the Child Care Subsidy Benefit.*

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Child Care Subsidy Administration Program  
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NPS 2015-10