

Childcare DOLLAR\$

► FOR WORKING FAMILIES

children's
institute

www.childrensinstitute.net

Dear parent/caretaker,

Thanks for your interest in Childcare DOLLAR\$, the subsidy program for working parents who need financial help with childcare costs. Below are the steps you need to follow to complete and submit your application:

- 1 **FILL OUT** the **Eligibility Worksheet** listed on page 2 of this booklet to see if you qualify. (You must answer "yes" to all questions in order to qualify).
- 2 **READ** the **Frequently Asked Questions for Parents** listed on page 3 of this booklet. You will find answers to many questions about how this subsidy program works.
- 3 **FILL OUT THE APPLICATION.** Please read the application directions. You can fill it out on your own, or make an appointment with a trained enrollment facilitator from our Daytime Enrollment Opportunities, enclosed for your convenience. They can answer your questions, make all necessary copies, and forward your application to Children's Institute. You do not have to enroll your child at the listed sites to get assistance filling out an application. You must submit with your application the following forms, which are enclosed in this packet:
 - **Childcare Provider Statement**
 - **Employment Verification Form(s)** – from each parent if two parent household
 - **Form (CSEU2521) (optional)** – complete only if you want to pursue child support

You will also need to provide:

- **A month's worth of your most recent pay stubs** – from each parent if two parent household.
 - **Copies of Social Security cards AND proof of ID (driver's licenses, and/or birth certificates for self, spouse, and children)** – **Only if** you have never received any sort of subsidized funding, services, or assistance from Monroe County Department of Human Services in the past.
- 4 **SEND YOUR APPLICATION TO CHILDREN'S INSTITUTE.** Send your completed application by mail, or drop off to our location at 274 N. Goodman Street, Suite D103, Rochester, NY 14607.
 - 5 **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?** Children's Institute will forward your application to Monroe County Department of Human Services. You will receive notification from Monroe County within 30 days by mail about the status of your application. If you do not receive notification within 30 days, please call Children's Institute at the number listed below.

If you still have questions, or need additional forms and/or an application, call **295-1000**, or email us at childcaredollars@childrensinstitute.net. You can also download application forms from our website at www.childrensinstitute.net/community/ChildcareDollars. **Thank you.**

Dirk Hightower
Executive Director
Children's Institute

Childcare DOLLAR\$

► FOR WORKING FAMILIES

1. Do I live in Monroe County? **Yes** **No**

If the answer is no, you are not eligible for childcare assistance in Monroe County. Please contact the local department of social services in your county of residence to apply for childcare assistance.

2. Am I (and my spouse) each working? **Yes** **No**

3. Are the children I am requesting care for under 13 years of age? **Yes** **No**

Unless they have documented disabilities, they can be up to 19.

4. To figure out my household size:

- If I'm the only adult in the household, count myself and all of my children under 18 years of age living with me, **OR**
- If I am married, count myself, my spouse, and all of our children under 18 living with us, **OR**
- If I am unmarried and there is an adult who lives with me with whom I have a child – count both of us, all of my children, and all of the other parent's children under 18 living with us, **OR**
- If I am unmarried and live with other adults without a child in common, count only myself and my children under 18 living with me, **OR**
- If I am a caretaker who is *not* a parent of the child(ren), do not count myself or my children. Count only the child(ren) who needs childcare. A caretaker is a relative raising the child, (e.g. has custody and financial responsibility for the child, and can provide legal proof).

NOTE: Having children aged 18 or 19 living with you may affect your eligibility. **Please contact Children's Institute at 295-1000**, to determine whether this will affect your eligibility.

Find your household size below, and circle the annual gross income amount for your household:

Household of 2	up to \$40,453	Household of 6	up to \$82,473
Household of 3	up to \$50,958	Household of 7	up to \$92,978
Household of 4	up to \$61,463		
Household of 5	up to \$71,968		

Is my income less than the amount I circled? **Yes** **No**

NOTE: New York State encourages families who are applying for or receiving childcare benefits to actively pursue court-ordered child support; *however, this is no longer an eligibility requirement.*

If you answered **YES** to all of the applicable questions,
you may be eligible for childcare assistance through Childcare DOLLAR\$!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

- **Do I have to wait for the Monroe County DHS to instruct me to send the other forms and paystub information for my application?** No, if you have all the necessary documents completed properly and current paystubs available, you can submit everything at one time to Monroe County DHS for review.
- **Once I have submitted an application, whom should I contact regarding the status of my application?** Applicants that apply should be aware that Childcare DOLLAR\$ application and processing takes time to complete. Monroe County has up to 30 days to review applications. There is no way to check the status of an application once submitted. You must wait to receive notification from Monroe County Department of Human Services about your application by mail.
- **What if my employer uses the Work 1-800 Number or will only submit my employment information to the organization requesting it directly?** You will just need to notify Monroe County Department of Human Services that your employer uses an outside service to verify employment or that your employer plans to send your information separately.
- **What if I have to make changes to my application information after I have mailed it to Monroe County?** Once you receive written notification, you will be provided a contact name and number of someone that you can speak to in order to report any changes to your application.
- **If I am approved, what will my subsidy start date be?** If you are approved for a subsidy, it will begin on or after January 1, 2012. Children's Institute . Under no circumstances are retro payments made to cover past due childcare costs, because of inability to pay.
- **Will expenses be covered 100%?** No, you will have to pay a weekly family fee to the provider. The weekly family fee is determined by Monroe County Department of Human Services using a combination of level of income and family size. Registration fees, and other fees charged by centers, will not be covered by this subsidy.
- **While I am awaiting a decision regarding the subsidy, should I continue to pay for my childcare if my child is already in care, or wait to pay my newly selected provider?** Because there is no guarantee that all applicants applying will be awarded a subsidy, we strongly advise parents to continue to make their childcare payments to their providers until they receive notification in the mail from Monroe County DHS.
- **Once approved will I have to pay up-front and be reimbursed or will the provider be paid directly?** If you are approved for a subsidy, the provider will be paid directly by Monroe County DHS for the cost of care up to the market rate minus the weekly family fee. You will be expected to pay your co-payment weekly. **Children's Institute does not maintain or have access to co-payment information.** Questions regarding this should be directed to Monroe County DHS after you receive approval notification.
- **Will I have to change providers if I am eligible for the program?** No. Parents have 100% choice, as long as the providers are registered, legal, and have vendor numbers. Monroe County DHS assigns vendor numbers and coordinates the enrollment process for new informal/legally exempt care providers.

Childcare DOLLAR\$

► FOR WORKING FAMILIES

- **Will a provider be assigned to me if I do not have one already?** No, but you will be given information on what to look for in quality childcare and then referred to potential providers who may meet your needs. Whom you choose is up to you.
- **What types of programs and providers are covered?** All eligible childcare providers are accepted. Eligible childcare providers are licensed, or registered with NYS Office of Children and Family Services, or are informal/legally exempt providers enrolled with Child Care Council. Informal providers can be relatives, friends, or neighbors.
- **If I am going to college and working, can I also get coverage for school time? Currently you must be going to school full-time AND working at least 17.5 hours weekly to be eligible for childcare for school coverage.** Also the subsidy will not cover 4 year degree programs, 2 plus 2 programs or most liberal arts programs. Programs leading to an associates degree and technical or vocational training leading to certification and or employment will be considered for full-time care. Additional documentation would be required (program description, program acceptance letter, and class schedule, etc.) at time of application submittal for consideration.
- **If I am self-employed, what sort of documentation do I need to provide?** You will need a copy of your tax returns or a notarized income statement from your accountant.
- **If I am on disability, can I still apply?** No, you must be working or have returned to work in order to apply. When returning to work after a disability, an applicant must supply a letter from the employer on letterhead, stating they have returned, in what capacity (job title, f/t, p/t, and work schedule), salary, and a contact person with phone number for verification purposes. This letter must be provided in addition to the standard employment verification form, which is part of the application requirements.
- **What if I just got a new job and do not have pay stubs?** The same requirements for a parent returning to work from a disability listed above apply to a parent who just got a new job.
- **What if I am working, but my spouse is on disability and unable to work or care for our kids? Can I still apply?** Yes, but you will need to provide documentation from your spouse's physician describing his/her condition and explains why your spouse cannot provide care to the children.
- **Will I have to recertify to keep my subsidy? If so, what documentation will I need for that?** Yes, once a year as funds for Childcare DOLLAR\$ remains available. Monroe County DHS will notify you regarding what documentation you need to provide before your recertification date. All information for recertification should be forwarded directly to Monroe County DHS.
- **I have looked at the income guidelines, but what counts as income?** Gross annual income includes (but is not limited to) wages, income received on rental property owned, social security benefits, temporary assistance, pensions, unemployment, workers' compensation, alimony, child support, and veterans' benefits.

If you have any questions, please contact Childcare DOLLAR\$ at
(585) 295-1000 or childcaredollars@childrensinstitute.net