



Washington State MILITARY CHILD CARE ROADMAP



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ORDERS TO WASHINGTON OR CHANGING NEEDS

Military installations & the surrounding civilian communities in Washington have waitlists for childcare. Washington does not have free preschool for everyone but offers free programs for those who qualify. Military families should start planning for their child care needs as soon as they receive orders to Washington State or are aware of an upcoming change in family status/childcare needs.



2

MILITARY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS

The Department of Defense and each Service Branch offer a variety of military-operated child care programs as well as fee assistance options for civilian and in-home child care. Determine which options are available and work for your needs at www.MilitaryChildCare.com.



3

SPECIAL CARE SUPPORT

If your family has special care requirements, including exceptional family members, respite care needs, deployment/recent PCS, there may be additional specialty child care resources and programs to support you. National Guard and Reserve families in Washington should refer to the National Guard/Reserve version of this document at www.dva.wa.gov/childcare.



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FINDING CHILD CARE

Search for military-operated child care through your installation as well as civilian community-based child care providers to help ensure you don't have a gap in care. There are a variety of referral options that can connect you to child care providers on base and in the community.



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PAYING FOR CHILD CARE

Subsidy & fee assistance options are available through the Department of Defense, your Service Branch, the State of Washington, nonprofit organizations, and other sources. Assistance may have eligibility and availability criteria.

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Your Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) connects Veterans and their family members to the benefits they earned through their military service. WDVA offers long-term care for honorably discharged Veterans and, in some cases, their spouses in four State Veteran Homes. The Veterans Services and Counseling and Wellness Divisions provide claims assistance and counseling services for Veterans and their family members. The State Veterans Cemetery honors Veterans in their final resting place. Explore the WDVA at www.dva.wa.gov or call 1-800-562-2308.



WASHINGTON STATE MILITARY TRANSITION AND READINESS COUNCIL



The Washington State Military Transition and Readiness Council (WSMTRC) is a partnership between federal, military, and private organizations that collaborate on career support for Veterans, transitioning service members, and military spouses, endorsing continuing priorities for military spouse employment and credential portability. WSMTRC supports several Communities of Practice, including Employment, Higher Education, National Guard/Reserve, Entrepreneurship, and Apprenticeship. For more information, visit the WSMTRC webpage at www.dva.wa.gov.

WASHINGTON STATE MILITARY SPOUSE INITIATIVE & CHILD CARE FOR MILITARY FAMILIES WORKGROUP

The Washington State Legislature created the Military Spouse Liaison position within the WDVA in response to a series of listening sessions with military spouses. Washington is the first state to have a Military Spouse Liaison, originating the position in 2021. Per legislation, the Military Spouse Liaison duties include reducing and removing employment barriers, conducting research, providing direct assistance, coordinating informational materials, and examining barriers and providing recommendations to increase access to high quality child care for military families. The Military Spouse Liaison also represents the military community as a Councilmember on the Washington State Early Learning Advisory Council. For more information, visit dva.wa.gov/militaryspouseinitiative.

The Washington State Child Care for Military Families Workgroup was formed in 2021 and is a program of the WDVA Military Spouse Initiative. It is a first-in-the-nation collaborative effort between the Department of Defense, state agencies (including WDVA and the Department of Children, Youth & Families), military installations, nonprofit organizations, corporate partners, school districts, child care providers, economic development councils, and military families to address the issue of child care for military families in the state. For more information, visit dva.wa.gov/childcare.





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ORDERS TO WASHINGTON OR CHANGING NEEDS



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MILITARY CHILD CARE PROGRAMS



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SPECIAL CARE SUPPORT



◆ As soon as you know your assignment is to Washington (even before receiving orders) or if your child care needs will be changing during your time in Washington (new baby, changing family dynamics, etc.), military families should **start their child care journey** at www.MilitaryChildCare.com.

◆ Create an account and setup a **household profile**. Keep your profile updated as your family's needs and location changes.

◆ You can see which **military-operated child care programs and military fee assistance options** are available at your location and your family is eligible for at www.MilitaryChildCare.com. You will also be able to see which civilian

community-based providers are participating in the military fee assistance program before you even submit your paperwork for military fee assistance.

◆ **Request military-operated child care and/or military fee assistance** (based on what is shown as options) at www.MilitaryChildCare.com and also search for options in the civilian child care community as soon as you have orders. (See Step 4: Finding Child Care.)

◆ After requesting military-operated care and/or fee assistance, you will receive an email (and possibly a phone call) with an **offer of care or fee assistance with next steps on how to accept the offer and submit required application/registration materials**.

⇒ Begin looking for **civilian community-based care options**. Many military families do not move off the installation's military-operated child care waitlist during their assignments to Washington State especially if they are not single parent or dual-military families. (See Step 4: Finding Child Care.)

THE MILITARY OFFERS CHILD CARE TO MILITARY FAMILIES DIRECTLY THROUGH THREE PRIMARY MILITARY-OPERATED PROGRAMS IN WASHINGTON:

- [1] **Child Development Centers (CDCs)** on military bases (generally for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years). In Washington, CDCs are located on Fairchild Air Force Base, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, Naval Base Kitsap, Naval Station Everett, and Yakima Training Center.
- [2] **Family Child Care (FCCs)** are home-based child care programs that offer care for infants through school age children and are certified and often subsidized by the military.
- [3] **School Age Centers (SACs)** on military bases generally provide before and after school care and summer care for children between the ages of 5 and 12. School Age Centers in Washington are located on Fairchild Air Force Base, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, and Naval Base Kitsap.

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN MILITARY FEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR CIVILIAN COMMUNITY-BASED CHILD CARE IF YOU ARE NOT USING MILITARY-OPERATED CHILD CARE.



- ◆ **Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN)** provides fee assistance for military families using civilian community-based child care providers that are nationally accredited.
- ◆ **Military Child Care in your Neighborhood-PLUS (MCCYN-PLUS)** program provides fee assistance to military families using civilian community-based child care that is state licensed and quality-rated level three or higher in the State's Early Achievers system.
- ◆ **Military Child Care in Your Home (CCYH)** helps military families in the Seattle/Tacoma area with the cost of full-time child care in their own homes.

⇒ If a civilian child care provider is not currently enrolled in MCCYN/MCCYN-PLUS but is eligible, **ask them to enroll** so you can receive military fee assistance. Eligibility waivers may also be available.

Many military families put themselves on **waitlists at civilian community-based child care centers/homes** before arriving in Washington based on where they anticipate finding housing. Use caution as there may be fees involved with these waitlists.

For more information about military child care options, visit www.MilitaryChildCare.com.

⇒ Military families may utilize military-operated child care or civilian community-based child care that is eligible for military fee assistance programs to receive military subsidized care or military fee assistance. You may also choose **civilian community-based care programs and providers** that are not eligible for or participating in MCCYN/MCCYN-PLUS although this may mean you do not receive military fee assistance. Military families may also be eligible for other State and Federally-funded child care/early learning assistance programs. (See Step 4: Finding Child Care and Step 5: Paying for Child Care.)

THERE ARE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY-BASED RESOURCES TO HELP YOU FIND AND PAY FOR CHILD CARE IF YOU HAVE A CHILD WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

- ◆ Military OneSource outlines **Care Options for a Child with Special Needs** to give an overview of military-operated and care in the civilian community. **MILITARY ONE SOURCE** <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/special-needs/efmp/child-care-options-for-military-families-with-special-needs/>
- ◆ Connect with the Military **Exceptional Family Member Program** for resources and referrals. <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/special-needs/efmp/>
- ◆ Military OneSource **EFMP and Me** offers several checklists including, Caregiver and Home Care Services, Caregiver Health and Respite Needs, Meeting Your Childcare Needs, and Finding a Child Care Provider. <https://efmpandme.militaryonesource.mil/add-checklists>
- ◆ Washington's PAVE provides support and resources to families impacted by disabilities. The **STOMP (Specialized Training of Military Parents)** provides information and resources to military parents. <https://wapave.org/stomp/>
- ◆ Washington Department of Children, Youth & Families offers **Working Connections Child Care Special Needs Rate** to qualified families through participating providers if you are participating in the State Working Connections child care subsidy. <https://dcyf.wa.gov/news/resources-families-special-child-care-needs>

THERE ARE MILITARY AND COMMUNITY RESPITE CARE PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES WHO PROVIDE CAREGIVING TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

- ◆ **Lifespan Respite Washington** offers respite support in the form of a voucher (financial award) to unpaid caregivers who support a family member, friend, or neighbor who has a special need or condition. Based on eligibility requirements, the voucher is \$1,000 per household per year. To qualify for the voucher you or the person you care for must not be enrolled in any program that provides respite services, unless you are on a wait list and not scheduled to receive services within 30 days of voucher application. Lifespan also has a searchable list of current registered respite providers. <https://www.lifespanrespitewa.org>
- ◆ **Arch National Respite Network and Resource Center** offers a searchable database of respite care providers. <https://archrespite.org>
- ◆ Tricare coverage under **Extended Care Health Option (ECHO)** includes respite care for primary caregivers. To confirm eligibility, talk with your child's case manager and your EFMP office. <https://www.tricare.mil/plans/specialprograms/echo>
- ◆ **Coast Guard Mutual Assistance Respite Care Program** provides temporary relief to eligible applicants who have responsibility 24 hours per day to care for an ill or disabled family member. <https://mycgma.org/programs/respite-care-grant/>
- ◆ **Military Respite Care programs** provides no-cost, short-term child care to EFMP children coded for moderate (20 hours/month) to severe (32 hours/month) needs.





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FINDING CHILD CARE

After setting up a www.MilitaryChildCare.com profile, you'll be able to view the **military-operated child care and military fee assistance programs** you're eligible for.

- ◆ If you are eligible for military childcare fee assistance: **MCCYN/MCCYN-PLUS, CCYH**, these options will show.
- ◆ Civilian child care providers participating in **MCCYN/MCCYN-PLUS** will be listed.

⇒ If there isn't availability or a right-fit for your family with the military-operated childcare or civilian community-based providers participating in military childcare fee assistance you find on www.MilitaryChildCare.com, you can explore options for other **civilian community-based care**.



Connect with **Child Care Aware of Washington** to search for other civilian community-based childcare options.

<https://childcareawarewa.org/family-services> (Click "Find Child Care"). This search option shows which fee assistance/subsidy programs the provider currently participates in and if they are Nationally Accredited and/or rated through Washington's Early Achievers system.

Upwards provides a searchable database of **Upwards** child care providers and will assign a child care navigator to you who understands military programs to help you locate care. You can search providers who take drop-in care, specialize in special needs, and accept various subsidies. www.upwards.com



After identifying a child care provider, you can search them in the Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families **Child Care Check** system to find out background check status, licensing history,

and monitoring reports. <https://www.findchildcarewa.org>.

You may want to explore a **babysitter or nanny** option either as an interim solution until you receive a slot with a child care provider or as your long-term care solution. There are military fee assistance and state subsidy programs that can help you pay for this type of care. (See Step 5: Paying for Child Care.)

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The Department of Defense offers a free subscription to **SitterCity** (a \$180 value) to anyone eligible for Military OneSource services to search caregivers, respond to caregivers interested in your job posting, read reviews, and buy background checks. Find more information and claim your member code here: www.militaryonesource.mil/parenting/child-care/military-child-care-services/.

Explore **non-traditional care, before/after school care, activity, and summer camp options** through organizations like the YMCA (<https://www.seattleymca.org/washington-ymcas>) and the Boys & Girls Club (www.washingtonclubs.org). Ask about possible waived or discounted joining/membership fees and discounts on childcare, before/after-school care, and summer care for military families.



Some families use child care options at gyms like the YMCA's

Child Watch, to workout and take a breather.



Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a free early learning or preschool

program funded by Washington State for children 3 to 5 and, in some locations, birth to 3. There are eligibility requirements. Only taxable income is counted as income so several military pay allowances are excluded. Children are prioritized for placement if they have a deployed parent, and other military factors impact eligibility. Contact your local ECEAP location to determine eligibility. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap>

Head Start is funded by the Federal government and provides free preschool for children ages 3 and 4. There are eligibility requirements. Only taxable income is counted as income so several military pay allowances are excluded, and other military factors may impact eligibility. Families receiving SNAP



benefits and/or Working Connections childcare subsidy are automatically eligible. Contact your local Head Start location to determine eligibility: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>.

For more information, visit www.dva.wa.gov/childcare.



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PAYING FOR CHILD CARE

THESE PROGRAMS MAY HELP MAKE CHILDCARE MORE AFFORDABLE FOR YOU:

MILITARY PROGRAMS - www.MilitaryChildCare.com



- ◆ Fees charged at **military-operated childcare programs** (Child Development Center/CDC, School Age Care/SAC, Family Child Care/FCC) are based on total family income and are generally substantially less than what civilian community-based care costs.
- ◆ **Military fee assistance programs (Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood (MCCYN) and MCCYN-Plus)** provide fee assistance (paid directly to the child care provider) for military families to utilize civilian community-based child care providers for full-time care based on eligibility criteria (nationally-accredited or rated level three or higher in Washington's Early Achievers program) and provider participation. Fee assistance pays the difference between the rate the family would pay at the installation CDC and what the provider charges (up to a cap). In many instances, military families in this program pay the same out-of-pocket as they would pay on base. If your childcare provider is not participating in the program, encourage them to enroll. If they are not eligible, there may be a waiver opportunity.
- ◆ **Child Care in Your Home (CCYH)** is a military fee assistance program that helps military families with the cost of full-time child care in their own homes. Seattle/Tacoma is an eligible geography for this pilot program. You must find your own child care provider who must meet eligibility requirements, complete training, and pass background checks. You are the employer which has tax implications.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS - <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help>



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

- ◆ **Working Connections Child Care Subsidy** through Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) pays a portion of the cost of childcare to state-licensed child care homes and centers that participate in the state subsidy program. Parents may be responsible for a copayment to their provider each month. There are income eligibility requirements, and the provider selected must be participating in the program. Military housing and food allowance are not counted as income in determining eligibility for Working Connections Child Care. See Washington Administrative Code [110-15-0070](http://www.wa.gov/cdc/110-15-0070) for this exclusion. As an example, a family of four with countable household income (excluding military housing and food allowances) of \$6,552 each month would have a \$165 monthly copay for child care with a participating provider. The income limit for a family of four is \$9,282 per month. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/wccc>
- ◆ **Family, Friend and Neighbor Care subsidies** are through DCYF and pay a rate of \$4 per child per hour of care directly to the provider. Families and providers must meet eligibility and training requirements. <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/ffn>
- ◆ **ECEAP and Head Start Preschool Programs** are free early learning child care or preschool programs. See eligibility information in Step 3: Finding Child Care. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/eceap-headstart>

⇒ Military families struggling to navigate military fee assistance and/or community-based child care subsidy programs can contact **Operation Child Care Project**, a nonprofit that provides free child care case management services to military families. <https://www.occpproject.org/case-management>



Contact the Military Spouse Liaison: militaryspouse@dva.wa.gov or 800-562-2308.