Childcare Provider Eligibility Expansion Pilot



Military Fee Assistance Expands Childcare Options

Background

Reliable, safe and affordable childcare ensures our service members can serve with total peace of mind, knowing their children are thriving. The fee assistance program Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood helps military families access quality, affordable, reliable childcare, thanks to partnerships with thousands of civilian providers across the country.

The War Department is testing innovative solutions to increase access to childcare in communities where demand is high and options are limited. Through a five-location pilot that includes faith-based, license-exempt childcare providers, the War Department is increasing childcare access and giving military families greater flexibility to choose programs that meet their unique needs. The pilot locations include Arkansas; Miami-Dade County, Florida; Maryland; North Carolina and Virginia.

The department selected the five pilot locations using two criteria: (1) the state or territory has a statute or regulation permitting qualifying faith-based childcare providers to operate under a licensing exemption and (2) the location already participates in the MCCYN- PLUS program.

Key changes and expanded eligibility

This pilot extends eligibility to include state-approved, faith-based, license-exempt providers — a legal provision that allows these childcare centers to operate with alternative regulatory requirements while still meeting required state health, safety and federal background check standards.

Additionally, to expand the availability of childcare options more broadly, childcare programs in public or private school-operated programs, such as preschool, prekindergarten, and before- and after-school programs, that are legally exempt from childcare licensing may be eligible to receive fee assistance on behalf of military families. Eligibility is subject to full compliance with applicable local and state education and childcare laws.

Pilot program goals

The pilot program aims to expand access to dependable childcare, ensuring military families have greater flexibility to choose programs that meet their unique needs. Reliable childcare helps service members stay focused on mission requirements. By expanding access where gaps exist, the pilot supports:

- Family stability
- Child well-being
- Service member readiness and retention
- Spouse employment

Implementation and participation

Families may choose a provider that is not yet part of the provider network. Prospective providers may begin by completing the MCCYN Provider Interest Form on MilitaryChildCare.com.

Provider participation is limited to designated pilot locations and compliance with health, safety and federal background check standards and program eligibility requirements.

Eligibility and availability

- MCCYN supports eligible active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve members, and eligible DOW civilians.
- Once approved, families may select participating providers in their community.
- Providers receive direct payments for a portion of the childcare cost, reducing the family's out-of-pocket expenses.

The pilot program aims to expand access to dependable childcare, ensuring military families have greater flexibility to choose programs that meet their unique needs.

MILITARY COMMUNITY AND FAMILY POLICY