

Due to the statewide COVID-19 impacts, the Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship (BBCCS) is changing how it supports child care for school-age children. Recognizing that families have a variety of school schedules and learning environments during this time, the BBCCS will authorize a school-aged child's hours up to 30 hours per week during the 2020-2021 school year. This change to authorization goes into effect 11/1/2020.

Can a parent request less than 30 hours of care for a school-age child? Yes, a parent can choose less than 30 hours per week to meet the child's needs for care.

Are there any circumstances in which a school-aged child can receive more than 30 hours? Yes, the scholarship will allow exceptions for the following family situations:

- A family with a child receiving the Special Needs Subsidy, or
- A family with a parent working non-traditional hours. (This includes the time of care during the hours of 6pm and 6am.)

A Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Eligibility Specialist can assist a family with determining if these circumstances apply.

Can authorized child care hours change with a school setting? The Best Beginnings Child Care Scholarship is authorizing school-age children up to 30 hours per week during the 2020-2021 school year, regardless of learning environment (remote learning, in class, etc.) and school schedule. This limitation in hours is in place to comply with federal rule regarding school-age care.

Does the scholarship pay for time when a school is closed? Yes, scheduled school closures are covered by the scholarship. For example, winter break or a scheduled holiday as shown on a school district's calendar are covered.

What other supports are available for a family? CCR&R agencies can provide information on school-age programs funded by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. A Special Circumstance Scholarship is available through CCR&R agencies to help parents offset costs for children aged 0-18, such as individualized or specialized care, respite, increased food and supply costs for in-home childcare, increased cleaning needs, and support for remote learning.

Additional Resources

Early Childhood Services Bureau: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare>

Child Care Policy Manual: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/childcare/childcarepolicymanual>

CCR&R Agencies: <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare/ChildCareResourceandReferral>

Best Beginnings Provider Portal: <https://dphhs.mt.gov/CCUBS>