

KIDS FIRST 2021 CHILDCARE FINANCIAL AID POLICIES



Kids First Childcare Financial Assistance Program is funded through a .45 % City of Aspen sales tax dedicated to housing and childcare. ALL families must re-apply annually by the August 1st deadline. Applications from families not currently in the program will be accepted by these deadlines for aid to begin the first of the following month:

- ✓February 1
- ✓August 1
- ✓May 1
- ✓November 1

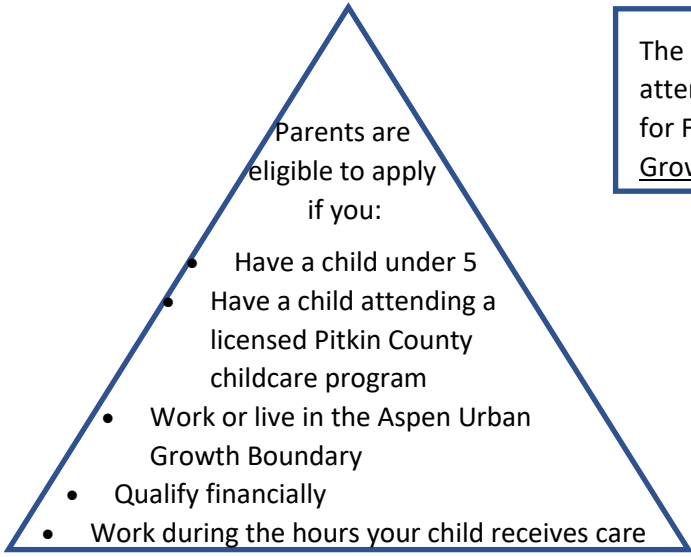
Applicants must supply the following information for both parents:

1. A copy of 2020 Federal tax return. (We do not accept extension letters.)
2. A copy of all W-2's for 2020
3. A copy of current pay stubs from all current employment
4. If self-employed, applicants must supply a current (YTD) profit/loss statement and complete set of 2019 business taxes. You may be asked for documentation to show that your business address is within Aspen's Urban Growth Boundary.
5. The employer verification form must be completed and returned by the employer(s) for both seasonal and full-time jobs.
6. Signed copy of documentation that the child is lawfully present in the US.
7. If a parent is unable to work due to a disability, the attending physician should confirm the nature of the disability. In addition, any disability income must be included on the Financial Aid application.
8. Divorce decree, separation agreement and/or custody agreement (if applicable)

IMPORTANT

***Kids First - City of Aspen
Childcare Financial Aid is
dependent on the availability of
funds. Families qualify for
childcare financial aid based on
their gross income, the cost of
childcare, the number of days a
child attends childcare, and the
number of children in childcare.
To see if you may qualify go to
[www.cityofaspen.com/childcar
e-financial-aid](http://www.cityofaspen.com/childcare-financial-aid) to try the pre-
qualification calculator.***

- The application must be signed and dated.
- All documents required must be on file to be considered a complete application.
- Any fraud or misrepresentation made by families to Kids First may disqualify them for current and future consideration. The City of Aspen reserves the right to prosecute any fraud or misrepresentation.
- Applications received after the deadline will be considered the following quarter. New applications will be reviewed and applicants notified during the month following the application deadline.
- Families receiving financial assistance from Kids First are responsible to report any changes in income, days using care, childcare provider, pay rate, work schedule or family number/status.
- After the initial application, families will be required to re-apply annually every May 1.



The parent or legal guardian of any child age 5 or under attending licensed childcare in Pitkin County is eligible to apply for Financial Aid. Families must live or work in the Aspen Urban Growth Boundary – please see the attached map.

Parents must be working or attending college on the days assistance is awarded. If a parent is attending college or working an overnight shift, you may qualify for childcare financial aid. Additional information will be required; please contact Kids First to find out more about this special circumstance.

Kids First Financial Aid will cover childcare for a maximum of 5 days per week. The minimum amount of Financial Aid awarded per day is \$5.00.

The Financial Aid program is specifically for working parents. **Both** parents must be working on the days when they receive aid.

Who Qualifies – How Much Help Will I Get?

Kids First Advisory Board and the City of Aspen expect that a family can pay an estimated 12% to 22% (depending on income level) of their income before taxes for childcare. Kids First reserves the right to alter the percentage of parent contributions depending on availability of funds.

Kids First Financial Aid begins at the point that a family exceeds the maximum income to qualify for the Colorado Childcare Child Care Assistance Program (CCCAP). CCCAP is the first payer; Kids First pays only if the family has been determined to be over CCCAP maximum income level. If a family qualifies for CCCAP, they will not qualify for Kids First financial aid. Families may be referred to CCCAP and may be required to complete that process before Kids First will determine eligibility for childcare financial aid.

For childcare programs to participate in Kids First Childcare Financial Aid, they must also have current agreements with the Colorado Childcare Assistance Program (CCCAP) and the Colorado Preschool Program (CPP).

Kids First has emergency financial aid for families in crisis. A separate application and doctor's written explanation or other verification is required. Please contact the Kids First office if you think you may qualify.

Hours Worked to qualify for days of financial aid
 8 to 15 hours/week you may qualify for 2 days of financial aid.
 16 to 22 hours/week you may qualify for 3 days of financial aid.
 23 to 28 hours/week you may qualify for 4 days of financial aid.
 29 or more hours/week you may qualify for 5 days of financial aid.

Income from all members of the household must be included on the application. Anyone who shares financial responsibility of the household that includes the child (children) must be listed. This may include both parents; mother and live in boyfriend; or father and live in girlfriend; grandparents; or other arrangements. In case of divorce, the parent that is applying for financial aid must submit court documentation that shows what each parent is responsible for paying. If the applicant receives child support then it will be included as income. Until a divorce is final, financial information and complete tax returns for both parents will be used to determine need for financial aid.

Kids First financial aid is paid directly to the early childhood program for each participating child. Days funded include days missed through no fault of the parent (i.e. sick day, or holidays when the program is closed). Kids First expects that in most cases sick days can be made up, when possible. Financial aid will pay for up to three sick days a month. If your child misses more than 3 days a month, those days may not be eligible for financial aid. In the case of extended illness, we require a written statement from the doctor.

How does this work with the childcare program I use?

Any days missed within the control of the parent (i.e. family trips), will not be paid with Financial Aid and the family is responsible for payment of the full tuition to the childcare program.

Families are responsible for paying any amount due to the childcare program that is not paid by Kids First Financial Aid. To continue to receive assistance from this program, families must be current in their payments to providers or risk losing Kids First childcare financial aid.

If your balance to a childcare program is unpaid for more than 30 days your Financial Aid will be probationary. If unpaid for 60 days your Financial Aid will stop and you may reapply the quarter after your balance is paid in full to the childcare program. You may also only reapply for Kids First financial aid with a new childcare program when all payments to other childcare programs are paid in full.

Up to \$150 per qualifying child may be provided annually for activity fees. The childcare provider must request this funding. The child must attend on the day the activity takes place. The activity fee will be paid to the provider.

Kids First expects that families receiving childcare financial aid will fully participate in their child's childcare program. Childcare programs depend on parent participation in many ways, because parent involvement in an early childhood program is a key indicator of quality and a primary component of the child's successful learning in future years.

The Financial Aid Committee meets quarterly to review applications for Financial Aid. This committee is charged with interpreting these policies and determining if financial aid is to be awarded. The committee may grant exceptions to any specific rules set forth herein. Decisions of the financial aid committee are final.

Families with more than one child in childcare will receive 100% of the qualifying financial aid for all qualifying children.

If a family fails to notify Kids First at the time of a salary or wage increase, Kids First will calculate the difference from the date of the change to the time we were notified and you will be responsible for any past tuition owed to the childcare provider. Failure to report any significant changes in a timely manner may result in immediate termination of the financial assistance benefit for the family.

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