



Summer 2021

FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Vol. 5, Issue 2

Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center News for Families

After a challenging 16 months enduring the pandemic and the economic hardships it caused, families across the country can look forward to better times ahead. New cases of COVID-19 are down, as are hospitalizations and deaths. More people are vaccinated, including children as young as 12, and there is hope that a COVID-19 vaccine for younger children will be available soon. Businesses are hiring and Gov. Inslee fully reopened Washington State June 30th.

Additionally, a new law that strengthens our state's child care system became law in May. The Fair Start for Kids Act benefits families with young children and child care providers, and some of the key benefits start this month. One of the biggest benefits is that child care subsidy copayments for families have been waived for July—September. That means families relying on Working Connections Child Care subsidies do not have to pay for child care during the summer. When family copayments restart in October 2021, they will be capped at \$115. Some families will pay less. Families can learn more about Working Connections by visiting the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families website here: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/wccc>.

Another key benefit of the Fair Start for Kids Act increases state payments to child care providers who care for children whose families use Working Connections Child Care subsidies. This means providers will earn a little more income, which can allow them to increase compensation for their staffs and possibly serve more children. Families can learn more about the benefits of the Fair Start for Kids Act for providers and families online here: <https://childcareawarewa.org/fair-start-for-kids-act-benefits/>.

For many families, summertime means finding new child care options. Our Family Center can help find child care providers that are open during the summer as well as local summer camps. Some of these summer programs enroll by the week and often each week offers a different, fun theme for kids, like super heroes, sports or science. Call the Family Center at 1-800-446-1114 for help, or search online at <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>.

As we look forward to fall, summer is a good time to make sure children get their well-child visits with pediatricians and get the vaccines they need to prevent serious illness. Seattle Children's has some great information about childhood immunizations available online here: <https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/development/immunizations/>.

Wishing everyone a happy and safe summer.

News for Families

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Family Child Care Copayments Waived for Summer

Working Connections Child Care subsidy family copayments have been waived for the months of July, August and September. When copayments restart in October, they will be capped at \$115. Visit <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-childcare/getting-help/wccc> for more information.

Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

This is an especially hard time to experience homelessness. Children who experience homelessness frequently live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their environments and relationships. These experiences can impair their emotional, cognitive and behavioral development.

It's critically important that young children experiencing homelessness receive the opportunity to play, learn and create friendships with their peers. Attending child care can provide all of this and more. Research shows quality child care can even act as a buffer for young children against the harmful effects of toxic stress.

Child Care Aware of Washington's Family Center helps families with young children who are experiencing homelessness find child care at no cost to them for up to one year, and helps them with their applications for Working Connections Child Care. For more information, please visit us at <https://childcareawarewa.org/services-for-families-experiencing-homelessness/> or call 1-800-446-1114.



Child Tax Credit

Did you know it is not too late to file 2020 federal income taxes and qualify for the Child Tax Credit? The American Rescue Plan Act expands this tax credit to most families, even those that do not normally file taxes. Most families may receive \$250—300 per child, per month with the Child Tax Credit, and some may also receive the \$1400 per person stimulus check if they did not already receive it. Find places nearby to get free assistance in filing federal income taxes here: <https://irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep/> or visit this website for more information: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/child-tax-credit/>.

When Will COVID-19 Vaccines for Young Children be Available?

Many parents want to know when a vaccine for children ages 0-11 will be available.

Some experts have said it is possible that at least one vaccine for children ages 5—11 could possibly be available by fall, but more are estimating it will be next year before one is ready. A vaccine for younger children could be ready fairly soon after that.

Safety testing on two of the main vaccines currently available to people ages 12 and up, Pfizer and Moderna, is happening at several children's hospitals around the U.S. Until results of these testing programs are known and vaccines are approved for children, parents should rely on their child's pediatrician for details on when their child may be ready to be vaccinated.



Free Virtual Play & Learn Groups for Caregivers & Children

Looking for fun ways to engage the young children you care for in great play-based early learning? Our Family Center can connect you to free online play and learn groups that create opportunities

for young children and their caregivers to explore fun and simple ways to support child development and school readiness at home.

With most in-person play groups paused due to the pandemic, virtual play groups can help keep little ones laughing, playing and learning. For help finding a play and learn group near you, call us at 1-800-446-1114.

Child Care Providers—What Makes Them So Amazing?

Talk to any parent or guardian who has ever enrolled their child or children in a licensed child care program, and more than likely you will hear them say things like:

- “My provider was so great. She helped us with _____.” (eating, talking, playing, potty-training, etc.)
- “I don’t know what we would have done if we didn’t have our child care provider.”
- “Our child care provider is AMAZING!”

So what makes child care providers so important and so loved by families? It’s usually a unique combination of kindness, creativity, dedication, resilience, energy, love and a sense of wanting to serve their communities.

“I am doing this to do a better job for the families and for our community,” says Maria Arias, family child care provider in Chelan. In addition to running a high-quality, dual-language child care program, she volunteers as a CPR instructor and an assistant at a local health clinic offering COVID-19 vaccines, and she is attending college to earn her degree in early childhood education.

“Being around kids is the most joyful experience,” says Miranda Kirk, family child care provider in Lakewood.

It’s happiness and commitment like this that makes child care providers some of the most wonderful people ever.

Early Achievers—Improving Washington’s Child Care System

Washington’s Early Achievers program helps child care providers across our state improve the quality of their programs. It also gives families a rating system to help them better understand a particular child care program’s quality. Early Achievers programs are rated by the University of Washington and earn ratings from Level 2 to 5. A Level 3 or higher is considered to be a “Quality Level of Excellence.”

Early Achievers is free for providers to join. It opens up great supports and resources like early learning coaching. There are more than 3,800-providers participating in Early Achievers and over 75,000 young children enrolled in Early Achievers programs.

To see what high-quality child care looks like and how Early Achievers is making an impact, watch our short Early Achievers Impact videos online here: <https://childcareawarewa.org/providers/early-achievers-success-stories/>.



Help Paying for Child Care

Washington families often have options when it comes to finding help to pay for child care. Our Family Center



representatives can explain the options and check eligibility to help families find out where they can find the assistance they need and are eligible for. Call 1-800-446-1114 M-F 8:30 am—4:30 pm, or visit <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>.

Stay Connected With Child Care Aware of Washington!

Follow us to learn about great, free resources for families with young children.

CCA of WA on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Child-Care-Aware-of-Washington-149636987661/>

CCA of WA on Instagram at @wachildcarematters

CCA of WA on Twitter: @childcarewa

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Advocacy:	Phone:	Website
MomsRising		https://www.momsrising.org/
Children's Alliance	(800) 854-5437	www.childrensalliance.org
Child Development		
Seattle Children's Hospital—classes & wellness information	(866) 987-2000 (206) 987-2000	www.seattlechildrens.org
Parenting Counts	(800) 637-3652	www.parentingcounts.org
Children's Therapy Center	253-854-5660	https://www.ctckids.org/
Zero to Three		www.zerotothree.org
PAVE Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment	1-800-5-PARENT	https://wapave.org/
American Academy of Pediatrics		www.healthychildren.org
Community Resources		
Child Care Subsidy Contact Center	1-844-626-8687	
Parent Trust for Washington	(800) 932-4673	www.parenttrust.org
Parent Help 123	(800) 322-2588	www.parenthelp123.org
Department of Children, Youth, and Families	(866) 482-4325	https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/
Apple Health	(855) 900-3066	www.applehealth.org
Washington Information Network	211	www.win211.org



Family Center: (800) 446-1114

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