



Reference Guide: Finding Child Care for Foster Families

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Health and
Human Services

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Child Care for Iowa's Foster Families

We recognize that for many foster families, your ability to accept a child into your home depends on your ability to secure child care. When the HHS case worker determines that child care is necessary, care provided to that child will be paid by either the Child Care Assistance (CCA) program or the foster care program without regard to the parents' income or other need for service. This will remain until the need for child care no longer exists.

The typical CCA process for foster care generally works like this:

- The HHS case worker will apply for Child Care Assistance (CCA) on behalf of the foster family.
- HHS will obtain and verify the parents' schedule to determine the number of authorized child care units. (A unit is one 5-hour block of time, so an average full-time schedule would be 10 units/week.)
- Once the parents select a child care provider with a valid CCA provider agreement, the family is 'attached' to the provider.
- HHS will mail the family a notice of decision that includes the authorized units.

Types of Child Care

Licensed Child Care Center

A **licensed child care center** cares for seven or more children, usually with classrooms for different aged children. It is the most common type of provider available.

If there aren't any vacancies in your community at a licensed center, there are still a few options you can explore. There are three types of home-based child care providers that are options for foster families under the right circumstances.

Child Development Home

A **child development home** is a person or program registered under Iowa Code 237A.3A that may provide child care to six or more children at any time. There are three categories of child development homes: A, B and C.

Child Care Home

A **child care home** is a person or program providing child care to five or fewer children and one school aged child, at any one time that is not registered to provide child care but does have an active child care assistance provider agreement.

In-home Providers

An **in-home provider** is a nonregistered provider who comes into your home to care for your child(ren). There must be at least three CCA eligible children needing child care to be approved as this type of provider. There is an exception process that can be pursued for those situations where there are not 3 eligible children or any other alternative care options available. More information about the exception process can be found on the HHS website.

May I use a child care home or in-home provider if a licensed provider is available in my community?

No, if a licensed center, registered child development home, or child care home with a child care assistance provider agreement are available, they must be utilized first.

According to Iowa Administrative Code 441-156.8(8)b(1), child care services **must** be provided by a licensed foster parent or a licensed child-care provider when available. If it is not possible to use a licensed center, registered child development home, or child care home with a child care assistance provider agreement, the rules allow an alternative which would be a child care home without a CCA provider agreement. The rules are permissive regarding the use of a child care provider. In-home care as arranged by the foster parents may also be used.

Note: When a foster parent also operates a child development home or a child care home, HHS cannot reimburse child care costs if the child is placed in their home as a foster child.

Finding Child Care

There are two primary sources for finding a child care option for a child in your care.

Iowa Child Care Connect (C3)

The first primary source for finding a child care option is a website with a powerful provider search tool named Iowa Child Care Connect (C3). Families can search for child care options based on their location or along specific routes, making it easier to find suitable care that fits their daily routines.

Access the C3 website here: <https://iachildcareconnect.org/>

Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R)

The second primary source for helping you find child care is Iowa's Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) Parent Services Team. CCR&R parent referral specialists are available to assist families in reviewing your child care needs and referring you to providers who best meet the needs of your family.

There are several ways to connect with the CCR&R:

- Access the CCR&R website: www.iowaccrr.org
- Text: [IAchildcare](tel:51555559925) to **59925**
- Email: childcare@episervice.org
- Call: **1-855-244-5301**

Paying for Child Care

Is there a cost to access child care?

Child care providers participating in the CCA program are required to communicate their billing practices and rates prior to providing services for families. There are **potential** fees depending on the provider chosen.

- If the child care provider charges above the state approved CCA rate, foster parents would be required to pay the difference. (*HHS Child Welfare Foster Family Home Manual 18-D(1) pg. 59*)
- If the child care provider charges private pay families for absent days, the CCA program will pay for up to four absent days a month. The foster parents would be required to pay for any additional absent days beyond the four allowable absences in a month.
- If the foster child attends child care for more units of child care than what is authorized by the CCA program, the foster parents are responsible for paying for the additional units.
- The foster parent(s) are responsible for expenses such as registration fees and certain summer programming fees.

I can't find any CCA funded options, what do I do?

Talk with your HHS case worker. When all other options have been exhausted, your HHS case worker may be able to access funds to pay for child care separate from the CCA program.

In-Home Provider Approval

After all other options have been exhausted and you have been authorized to have an approved in-home provider, there are requirements the individual acting as your provider will need to meet.

Are in-home providers required to take training?

Yes, in-home providers have some professional development requirements.

Provider requirements include:

- A free course titled “Essentials Child Care Preservice Training” in Iowa's Early Childhood and School Age Professional Workforce Registry (i-PoWeR).
- The Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter Training (MCART) is required for all providers accepting Child Care Assistance (CCA) and is also offered for free.
- The provider must have a current first-aid and CPR certification that includes infant and child CPR by a nationally recognized training organization, such as the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, National Safety Council, American Safety and Health Institute or MEDIC First Aid. First-Aid and CPR courses typically charge a fee for taking the course.

What is the timeline for in-home provider approval?

The timeframe depends largely on the applicant and how quickly they complete the health and safety trainings and background checks. Historically, nonregistered in-home providers typically completed the entire process within 60 days but can do it even quicker if they complete the tasks and submit the necessary paperwork promptly.

Links for Prospective In-Home Providers

I-PoWeR

- <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/trainingregistry/TrainingRegistry/Public/>
- Essentials Child Care Preservice Training, offered in I-PoWeR
- <https://secureapp.dhs.state.ia.us/TrainingRegistry/TrainingRegistry/SeriesDetail?id=w8zOhYQb6%2b4%3d>

MCART Training

- <https://iowaccrr.org/training/MCART/>

Child Care Provider Portal

- ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/default.aspx
- From a portal account, individuals can:
- Apply to become an In-Home Provider
- Renew or make a change to their CCA Provider Agreement,
- Find requirements for provider types, and other rules, forms, and documents.

CCA Provider Agreement

- <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/DocumentViewer.aspx?ID=10>

Payment Application for nonregistered providers

- <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/providerportal/DocumentViewer.aspx?ID=2>