



SC Voucher Program
PARENT HANDBOOK

1-800-476-0199

Fax 1-800-310-5417

scchildcare.org

INTRODUCTION TO THE SC VOUCHER PROGRAM

Your family is eligible to receive child care services from the SC Voucher Program. This handbook contains information that will help you understand the program and what is required of you. **Please read it carefully and keep for your future reference.** If you have questions contact the SC Voucher Program Control Center, hereafter called the Control Center, at 1-800-476-0199.

The SC Voucher Program will pay all or a portion of your child care cost for eligible children up to age 13, or up to age 19 if approved for Special Needs child care. The amount to be paid by the SC Voucher Program depends upon the funding source under which you were approved. The amount of funding for which you are eligible will vary according to the following:

- age of your child(ren),
- hours and weeks of care needed, and
- choice of provider.

CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

When you are approved to receive child care services from the SC Voucher Program, you must choose a child care provider to serve your children. If you need help finding a child care provider, you may call 1-800-476-0199 to request a listing of child care providers in your area, or you may visit scchildcare.org for a listing of enrolled SC Voucher Program providers in your area.

You may choose care from a licensed child care center, licensed group child care home or a registered or licensed family child care home. You may also choose a licensed child care center or group home operated by a local church congregation or established religious denomination, or care through a family member, friend or neighbor who is at least 21 years of age. (Clients receiving services under Child Protective Services or Foster Care may choose **only** licensed facilities or programs.)

If you are interested in a child care provider that is not currently enrolled in the SC Voucher program, the provider must call the Control Center at 1-800-262-4416 to request the necessary paperwork for enrollment.

Questions that you may want to ask to help you choose your provider wisely are:

- Will the provider allow unlimited access to my child during normal hours of operation or whenever my child is under the provider's supervision?
- Does the provider have a schedule showing the days she will be closed so I can make other child care arrangements for those days?

- Does the provider have a daily schedule of activities and curriculum? What will my child be doing while he is with the provider?

The following steps should be followed in selecting a child care provider for your child:

- Select a provider as soon as possible, but within 15 calendar days from the date you receive this information. If you **DO NOT** act quickly, you may lose your child care approval. If you need extra days to select the provider, call **1-800-476-0199** to request an extension.
- Once you have selected a provider, give them the blue Client/Provider Connection Card, which is included in your packet, to complete. The provider must complete the connection card and then mail or fax it (fax number 800-310-5417) to the Control Center. Once the connection card is received and processed, you and your provider will receive written notification of your authorization to begin receiving child care services.

NOTE: Make sure you sign the connection card before your provider submits it.

CHOOSING FAMILY, FRIEND AND NEIGHBOR CHILD CARE

You may use a family member, friend or neighbor who is not licensed/registered by DSS to care for your child. The family member, friend or neighbor must request the necessary paperwork to enroll as a SC Voucher Program provider. Your provider must be approved by the SC Voucher Program and enrolled in the SC Voucher Program before they can be paid. If you choose child care with a family member, friend or neighbor the following things are important to remember:

- A certification of minimum health and safety standards of the home must be signed by you and the provider and approved by DSS.
- A central registry and sex offender check must be done on all adults 18 years old or older that will be in the home during the time the child is in care.
- Care by relatives, friends or neighbors is not regulated by the DSS. You are solely responsible for checking the services provided to your child.
- Family, friend and neighbor care providers may care for the children of only one unrelated family, in addition to their children. If the provider you select wants to care for more than one unrelated family, they must be registered by DSS.
- Your provider cannot reside in the same household as the child approved for child care services.

PAYMENT OF FEES

Client Fees:

In the SC Voucher Program you may be required to pay a weekly fee toward the cost of child care. This fee is based on your family's gross monthly income and family size, and applies to each child who will receive care. The client fee is due to the provider at the beginning of the week. The provider may drop you from their facility if you do not pay the weekly fee as required.

NOTE: If you are a Family Independence (FI) participant, or a foster parent, you are not required to pay a weekly client fee. However, you are responsible for paying any other fees the provider charges that are not paid by the SC Voucher Program.

Additional Provider Fees:

Your provider may charge fees for field trips for your child, late pickup in the afternoon, or for other instances as specified by the provider. It is your responsibility to pay these additional fees as they are above and beyond the weekly cost of the child care services paid for by the SC Voucher Program.

Rate Differences:

If the weekly child care cost paid by the SC Voucher Program is less than the weekly cost the provider charges, you are responsible for paying the difference between the amount the SC Voucher Program pays and the amount the provider charges.

Registration Fees:

The SC Voucher Program pays a registration fee to the provider for each authorized child one time in a one year period. If the SC Voucher Program has paid the registration fee to your provider, and you transfer to a new provider, you will be responsible for paying the new registration fee. If your provider charges a registration fee that is higher than what the SC Voucher Program pays, or charges a registration fee more often than one time per year, you are responsible for paying the difference to the provider.

You pay all fees directly to your provider. Your provider may choose to stop serving your child if you fail to pay any of the required fees not paid by the SC Voucher Program.

NOTE: Keep a receipt from your provider for all fees you pay.

PROVIDER PAYMENTS

Your child care provider will be paid when they submit a Service Voucher Log (SVL) to the SC Voucher Program.

REPORTING CHANGES IN YOUR FAMILY SITUATION

You **MUST** report changes in your household situation to the Control Center within 10 calendar days after the change occurs. Failure to report these changes may result in termination of your child care services. Examples of changes in your household situation are:

- Increases or decreases in your paycheck or the number of hours you work
- Change of jobs from one employer to another
- Loss of your job
- Changes in your enrollment in school - i.e. you have graduated or stopped attending school
- Changes in your training participation
- Changes in your marital status- i.e. you got married, separated, got divorced
- Changes in your family size – i.e. you have a new baby or gained custody or guardianship of additional children
- Change of address

CHANGING CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

You may change child care providers with advance notice and approval from the Control Center. Notify your current provider that you want to transfer, **AND** contact the Control Center at 1-800-476-0199 to receive an approved transfer date. You must get approval from the Control Center, and your new provider must receive written authorization from the Control Center before you change providers. If you transfer without approval, you are responsible for the full cost of the service until you receive your approval letter.

Remember: Only one provider will be paid for each week of service.

PARENT COMPLAINT PROCESS

Complaints, suggestions or concerns about your SC Voucher Program provider arrangements should be made by calling 1-800-763-ABCD.

FAIR HEARING

Any applicant or client adversely affected by an action taken by the SC Voucher Program may request a fair hearing. This must be done by writing to SCDSS, Individual and Provider Rights, P.O. Box 1520, Columbia, SC 29202-1520. Adverse actions include denial of benefits or termination of child care services. Child care services that are not re-authorized at the end of an eligibility period due to lack of funding or to time limits set for specific populations in SC Voucher Program policy are not adverse actions and are not issues for a fair hearing. You must request a fair hearing within 30 days of notification of any adverse action.

REDETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY

Some funding sources allow clients to receive child care services longer than others. If you are eligible to receive continued child care under any of these funding sources, you will be informed and eligibility will be re-determined. Eligibility must be re-determined at least once a year.

Sixty days before your child care services will end, you and your child care provider will be sent a letter to remind you that services will end. If you are not eligible for continued funding, the letter will tell you when services will end.

ABSENCES

When your child is approved for child care services under the SC Voucher Program, they are allowed a set number of absences based on the number of weeks of child care services authorized. Your Authorization/Connection letter gives you the authorized number of weeks of child care services. Your allowable absences are as follows:

1 week of child care = 1 absence	27 weeks of child care = 16 absences
2 weeks of child care = 1 absence	28 weeks of child care = 17 absences
3 weeks of child care = 2 absences	29 weeks of child care = 17 absences
4 weeks of child care = 2 absences	30 weeks of child care = 18 absences
5 weeks of child care = 3 absences	31 weeks of child care = 19 absences
6 weeks of child care = 4 absences	32 weeks of child care = 19 absences
7 weeks of child care = 4 absences	33 weeks of child care = 20 absences
8 weeks of child care = 5 absences	34 weeks of child care = 20 absences
9 weeks of child care = 5 absences	35 weeks of child care = 21 absences
10 weeks of child care = 6 absences	36 weeks of child care = 22 absences
11 weeks of child care = 7 absences	37 weeks of child care = 22 absences
12 weeks of child care = 7 absences	38 weeks of child care = 23 absences
13 weeks of child care = 8 absences	39 weeks of child care = 23 absences
14 weeks of child care = 8 absences	40 weeks of child care = 24 absences
15 weeks of child care = 9 absences	41 weeks of child care = 25 absences
16 weeks of child care = 10 absences	42 weeks of child care = 25 absences
17 weeks of child care = 10 absences	43 weeks of child care = 26 absences
18 weeks of child care = 11 absences	44 weeks of child care = 26 absences
19 weeks of child care = 11 absences	45 weeks of child care = 27 absences
20 weeks of child care = 12 absences	46 weeks of child care = 28 absences
21 weeks of child care = 13 absences	47 weeks of child care = 28 absences
22 weeks of child care = 13 absences	48 weeks of child care = 29 absences
23 weeks of child care = 14 absences	49 weeks of child care = 29 absences
24 weeks of child care = 14 absences	50 weeks of child care = 30 absences
25 weeks of child care = 15 absences	51 weeks of child care = 31 absences
26 weeks of child care = 16 absences	52 weeks of child care = 31 absences

When you are approved for SC Voucher Program child care services, it is assumed that you need child care in order to go to work, school, or training, and that your child will attend the provider every day he is supposed to attend. We understand that there will be occasions when your child will need to be absent from the provider, however, your child care provider is required to report all absences to the SC Voucher Program. If your child exceeds the number of absences he is allowed, **his child care services will be terminated.**

When your child is going to be absent from the child care provider, and it is a day that the child is supposed to attend, you should call the provider to tell them that the child will be absent and the reason for the absence. Many absences can be excused, and excused absences will not count against the child. In order for an absence to be excused, either you or your child care provider should mail or fax (see mailing address and fax number below) doctor's excuses, copies of court orders for visitations to non-custodial parents, handwritten notes from you, etc to the Control Center. The SC Voucher Program understands that a child does not go to the doctor every time he is sick. We will accept a hand written note from you stating that you kept your child home from the provider on a specific date because the child was sick and could not attend the provider. If you are not sure if the reason for an absence meets the criteria for being excused, send the information in anyway. You should send all absence excuses **as soon as** your child is absent from the provider. Please make sure that you include your name, the last 4 numbers of your social security number, and the child's name on all excuses that you send in.

If your child is absent from the provider due to an unknown reason, the absence will be counted as a vacation day. Vacation days are un-excused and will count against your child's allowable absences.

You must follow the attendance policies in using child care services. Failure to use the child care services you are given could result in the termination of your child care services. If you are terminated for excessive absences and you have documentation that may excuse the absences, you must submit the information to the Control Center for review before the effective termination date on your letter. If the excuses are sent in after the date of the termination they will not be accepted.

If you are aware that your child will not need child care services for a week or longer, you should contact the Control Center to discuss the situation.

If your child is absent from the provider for 10 days in a row payment to the provider may stop.

If you have questions about absences contact the Control Center at 1-800-476-0199.

If you have information about absences that you need to send in, mail it to:

S.C. Department of Social Services
SC Voucher Program
P.O. Box 100160
Columbia, S.C. 29202-3160

Or fax to 1-800-310-5417

REASON FOR TERMINATION OF CHILD CARE

Your child care services may be terminated if:

- One or both parents are no longer employed; or
- One or both parents are no longer attending a training or educational program; or
- Your family income exceeds the income guidelines for your family size; or
- Your child no longer lives with you; or
- Your child no longer needs child care; or
- Your child exceeded allowed absences; or
- You submit fraudulent information; or you abuse the system; or
- Your Family Independence (FI) benefit case closes; or
- Your Child Protective Services (CPS) child care eligibility ends or the CPS case closes.

CLIENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

CLIENT RIGHTS:

1. You have the right to choose a child care center, family child care home, group child care home, church facility, or care by a family member, friend, or neighbor. If you are receiving services under Child Protective Services or Foster Care, you may choose only licensed facilities or programs.
2. You have the right to visit your child any time he is in the provider's care.
3. You have the right to make complaints or discuss areas of concern or suggestions regarding the SC Voucher Program by calling 1-800-763-2223.
4. You have the right to receive a fair hearing regarding any decision that results in the denial or termination of services, provided that the decision is not due to funding. Requests for fair hearings shall be submitted in writing to **Individual and Provider Rights, SCDSS, P.O. Box 1520, Columbia, South Carolina, 29202-1520.**

CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. It is your responsibility to provide current and accurate verification of gross family income, family size, age of child(ren), change of address, and employment/school/training and to report all changes to this information within 10 calendar days after the change occurs.
2. It is your responsibility to pay your provider for child care services you receive before or after the authorized dates of service.
3. It is your responsibility to choose a child care provider within 15 calendar days from the date you are notified of your eligibility for services.
4. It is your responsibility to pay a weekly client fee based on your family size and income, for each child receiving child care services through the SC Voucher Program. The weekly fee is due to your provider before the weekly child care service is provided. You may also be responsible for paying the difference between the maximum amount the SC Voucher Program pays and what the provider charges.

5. It is your responsibility to assure your child attends the provider in accordance with SC Voucher Program attendance policies.

6. It is your responsibility to call the Control Center at 1-800-476-0199 to request approval to transfer to a new provider before you stop attending one provider and before transferring to another.

In accordance with Title VI Section 601 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title V Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Department of Health and Human Services will administer its programs in such a manner that no person shall solely by reason of his race, color, national origin or qualified handicap, be excluded from participating in, be denied the benefit of or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity administered by the Agency. For more information contact the Control Center at 1-800-476-0199.

For More Information

Check out our EITC Assistant, an interactive tool that shows you whether or not you qualify to claim the credit, and why. Available on www.irs.gov/eitc , or ask your tax preparer.

Para Obtener Más Información

Consulte con nuestro Asistente EITC, una herramienta interactiva que le indicará si reúne si reúne o no los requisitos y porqué. Esta herramienta está disponible en www.irs.gov/espanol, o puede consultar con su preparador de impuestos.



EITC

Extra Money in Your Pocket with EITC

Dinero Extra en su Bolsillo con EITC

Earned Income Tax Credit
Crédito por Ingreso del Trabajo

Information from the Internal Revenue Service

Información del Servicio de Impuestos Internos

The earned income credit (EIC) is a tax credit for certain people who work, but don't earn high incomes. A tax credit usually means more money in your pocket. It reduces the amount of tax you owe. The EIC may also give you a refund. You should meet certain requirements to be eligible. Here are the rules:

- Must have earned income
- Must have a valid Social Security Number
- Cannot have much investment income
- Generally, must be a U.S. citizen or resident alien the entire year
- Cannot use "married filing separate" filing status
- Cannot be a qualifying child of another person
- If you do not have a qualifying child, you must:
 - Be age 25 but under 65 at the end of the year,
 - Live in the United States for more than half the year, and
 - Not qualify as a dependent of another person
- U.S. Military personnel on extended active duty outside the United States are considered to live in the United States while on active duty.
- Cannot file Form 2555 or 2555-EZ (related to Foreign Earned Income)

Taxpayers who qualify and claim the credit could pay less federal tax, pay no tax, or receive a refund.

Four Most Common EITC Filing Errors

1. Claiming a child who's not a qualifying child
2. Married taxpayers who incorrectly file as single or head of household
3. Misreporting Income
4. Incorrect Social Security Numbers

El Crédito Tributario por Ingreso del Trabajo (EITC), es un crédito tributario para las personas que trabajan pero que no ganan mucho dinero. Un crédito tributario usualmente significa más dinero en su bolsillo. Este reduce la cantidad de impuestos que usted adeuda. El EITC puede también darle un reembolso. Usted deberá cumplir con ciertos requisitos para poder reclamarlo. Estos son los requisitos:

- Tiene que tener ingreso del trabajo
- Tiene que tener un número de seguro social válido
- Puede tener una cantidad limitada de ingreso de inversiones
- Por lo general, tiene que ser ciudadano de los Estados Unidos o extranjero residente durante todo el año
- No puede usar el estado civil para efectos de la declaración de "casado que presenta la declaración por separado"
- No puede ser hijo calificado de otra persona
- Si no tiene un hijo calificado, usted tiene:
 - Tener al menos 25 años de edad, pero ser menor de 65 años de edad al final del año,
 - Vivir en los Estados Unidos por más de la mitad del año, y
 - No puede calificar como dependiente de otra persona
- El personal militar de los Estados Unidos que presta servicio activo prolongado fuera de los Estados Unidos se le considera vivir en los Estados Unidos mientras presta servicio activo
- No puede presentar el Formulario 2555 ni el Formulario 2555-EZ (relacionado con el ingreso del trabajo en el extranjero)

Los contribuyentes que reúnen los requisitos y reclaman el crédito podrían pagar menos impuesto federal, no pagar ningún impuesto federal o hasta recibir un reembolso.

Los Cuatro Errores Más Frecuentes que se Cometen Cuando se Reclama el EITC

1. Reclamar un hijo que no es hijo calificado
2. Contribuyentes casados que presentan la declaración incorrectamente como soltero o cabeza de familia
3. Declarar el ingreso incorrectamente
4. Números de seguro social incorrectos

SC Voucher Program 2015 Holiday Closings

NEW YEAR'S DAY	THURSDAY, JANUARY 1ST
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY	MONDAY, JANUARY 19TH
PRESIDENT'S DAY	MONDAY, FEBRUARY 16TH
CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL DAY	MONDAY, MAY 11TH
NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY	MONDAY, MAY 25TH
INDEPENDENCE DAY	FRIDAY, JULY 3RD
LABOR DAY	MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH
VETERAN'S DAY	WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 11TH
THANKSGIVING DAY	THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 26TH
DAY AFTER THANKSGIVING	FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27TH
CHRISTMAS EVE	THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24TH
CHRISTMAS DAY	FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25TH
DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS	MONDAY, DECEMBER 28TH