Cornell Child Care Grant
For Faculty and Staff
Frequently Asked Questions

Basic information
- What is the Cornell Child Care Grant for Faculty and Staff?
- Why has Cornell University instituted the Cornell Child Care Grant?
- Does the Grant amount show anywhere on my W-2 form and/or is it considered taxable income?
- Where can I find out more about the Grant or get help with the application?
- How do I learn more about child care options available?

Eligibility
- Who is eligible?
- Is there a household income limit?
- Why must my spouse or partner be employed, a full time student, disabled, or actively seeking employment for us to be eligible for the Grant?
- I share custody for my child with another person who is not my spouse/partner. Can I still apply for the Grant?
- I’m a student. Am I eligible?
- What types of child care expenses are eligible for the Grant?
- What are the program definitions of legal care?
- Do overnight camp expenses qualify for the Grant?
- Does the cost for extracurricular activities qualify for the Grant?
- My child attends a private kindergarten. Are those costs eligible?
- I’m expecting to add a child to my family. Can I apply, even though the child is not in our home yet?
- I have a child with a disability-related special need. Can I apply?
- My special-needs child will be 13 this year. Is she/he still eligible?

How to apply
- How do I apply for the Grant?
- What types of documentation do I need to provide?
- What if my spouse/partner is self-employed?

Estimating the cost of care
- How do I estimate the cost of care?
- I have more than one child who is cared for by one provider, and I pay “family” rate. How do I report that?

What to expect once you’ve applied
- How is the decision made on who will receive the Grant?
- I’ve received a Grant before. Can I expect the same amount of Grant money this year?
- Can I estimate how much I might receive?
- Is there a maximum total amount I might receive?
- How will I be notified about whether I’ll receive an award?
- When will I be notified about a decision on whether I’ll receive an award?
- How will I receive the Grant?
- Will the Grant be paid to my day care provider?
- How will the Grant affect my Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account if I am already contributing my own money to it?
- When is the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Open Enrollment Period?
- When can I expect to begin using my Grant award?
- How do I file a request for reimbursement?
- What should I do if I leave Cornell during this year?
- Where can I find more information on the Flexible Spending Care Account as well as claim forms?
Basic information

What is the Cornell Child Care Grant for Faculty and Staff?
Cornell University’s Child Care Grant helps you pay for your child care expenses by granting awards of up to $5,000 a year, tax-free. In order to receive Grant funds on a tax-free basis, you must be eligible to participate in the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account each year. The Grant covers eligible child care, including infant and toddler day care, preschool/pre-K programs, care on school holidays, school-age summer day camps/programs, and school-age before/after school care. This Grant helps you explore options and find creative solutions to some of the child care challenges you face.

Why has Cornell University instituted the Cornell Child Care Grant?
Cornell University has a long-standing commitment to addressing the work/life and work/family issues of its diverse population. One of these issues, the cost of quality child care, was identified by the university’s Task Force for Working Families in 1990. Since that time, Cornell University, through the Division of Human Resources, has developed programs to address the needs of its faculty and staff, such as the flex policy, an onsite and a near-site child care center, adoption assistance, the catastrophic leave policy, and many others. The Child Care Grant is one of these many programs.

Does the Grant amount show anywhere on my W-2 form and/or is it considered taxable income?
Yes, the amount will be reflected on your W-2 and this amount is not considered taxable income. It is employer money and it is displayed for IRS reporting purposes. The full grant amount awarded is displayed on your W-2 whether or not you use the entire amount.

Where can I find out more about the Grant or get help with the application?
Help is available at childcare@cornell.edu or by calling Nicole Kotmel in Benefit Services at (607) 255-3936.

How do I learn more about child care options available?
You may contact Eileen McCoy Whang, Dependent Care Consultant, in Career/Life Services, for information on local child care options and parenting resources. She is available for individual confidential consultations whether you currently have children or you are expecting a baby. Eileen can be reached at emw76@cornell.edu or (607) 255-1917.

The Child Development Council of Tompkins County is also available to assist you with identifying child care options if you should find that your child(ren) are not in legal care, and if the Child Care Grant affords you the opportunity to choose other care options. For more details about the Child Development Council, see: www.childdevelopmentcouncil.org or call (607) 273-0259.
Eligibility

Who is eligible?
To be eligible for the Grant, you must:

1. Be a benefits-eligible Cornell faculty or staff member eligible to participate in Cornell’s Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account. County Extension Association employees are not eligible to apply for the Grant.
2. Be unmarried or, based on IRS rules for Dependent Care Accounts, have a spouse/partner who is:
   a. Employed at least part time or
   b. A full-time student or
   c. Considered legally disabled or
   d. Unemployed but actively seeking employment: must have legal work authorization to work in the United States (work visa is required and must be attached as documentation).
3. Have a total household gross income of less than $150,000 per year
4. Have a child who is your legal dependent (as defined by IRS regulations), and for whom you are financially responsible or be pregnant and anticipating child care expenses for 2016.
5. Have a child under age 13 or have an older child that has a disability-related special need that can be documented.

According to Internal Revenue Service rules, faculty and staff who work part time or whose spouse/partner is a full-time student, legally disabled, or unemployed but actively seeking employment may receive a smaller Grant.

Is there a household income limit?
Yes, in order to be eligible for the Grant, you must have a total household gross income of less than $150,000 per year. See previous question for additional eligibility requirements.

Why must my spouse/partner be employed, a full time student, disabled, or actively seeking employment for us to be eligible for the Grant?
IRS regulations of Flexible Spending Dependent Care Accounts govern the Grant. The IRS considers child care expenses to be eligible expenses if they allow you and your spouse/partner, to work or look for work. If your spouse/partner is unemployed as of the time you expect to receive the Grant, you will be required to provide a projection of income for the upcoming year if he or she is actively seeking employment. This amount can be based on the previous tax year tax return or an estimation of salary of his or her given profession. To be eligible for the Grant, any spouse/partner who is looking for work must have legal work authorization to work in the United States (work visa is required and must be attached as documentation). If your significant other remains unemployed throughout the year and doesn’t meet one of the other exceptions/conditions (is disabled or a full time student), you will be ineligible for the Grant and will not be able to use the Grant funds. To understand the term, “actively seeking employment,” you should check the IRS regulations related to flexible spending accounts (www.irs.gov) publication 503.

I share custody for my child with another person who is not my spouse/partner. Can I still apply for the Grant?
Yes, but only if you will be claiming the child as a dependent on your tax return for the year in which you use the Grant. If you will not claim the child as a dependent, you cannot apply for the Grant in relation to that child.

I’m a student. Am I eligible?
Students are not eligible for this program. There is, however, a separate program available for students that can be accessed here: http://studentparents.dos.cornell.edu/

What types of child care expenses are eligible for the Grant?
Only expenses related to legal child care, as defined by the New York State Office of Family and Children’s Services (http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/) are eligible for the Grant. This includes expenses for primary and backup or occasional care arrangements provided for children from 6 weeks through age 12. (For definitions of legal care, see information listed in the question below). Your child(ren) must be enrolled in legal care to be eligible for the Grant. By submitting an application for the Grant, you authorize Cornell University to verify that your child care arrangement fits within these definitions. Any misrepresentation of information can result in the termination of the Grant and could have adverse employment consequences.
What are the program definitions of legal care?
In New York State, there are several forms of legal care, including both informal and regulated care. These include the following categories:

Informal Care - Unregulated but legal (no permit required):
1. Provider is required to claim income from child care services provided on taxes, and
2. A person who provides child care in his/her home for a maximum of two children at a time, in addition to his/her own children, or
3. A person or program providing care for any number of children for less than three hours a day, or
4. A person who provides care in the home of the child (in-home care), or
5. A person who is closely related to the children in care (includes grandparents, aunts, uncles, first cousins).

Regulated Care – Child care that is regulated by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services, which issues permits (registrations and licenses). Some common types include:
- Family Day Care - must be registered. One provider, age 18 or older, receives a permit to care for a maximum of five to eight children on a regular basis in a personal residence. Maximum capacity depends on the ages of children in care.
- Group Family Day Care - receives a license. The maximum capacity is 10 to 14 children and depends on the ages of children in care. Care is provided on a regular basis in a personal residence by approved caregivers who are age 18 or older. One caregiver is required for every two children under age two years. A minimum of two providers must be present whenever seven or more children are in care.
- Day Care Center - must be licensed. Care is provided to six or more children on a regular basis for more than 3 hours a day, usually at a location other than a residence. There are strict building, staffing and program requirements. Children are grouped by age (6 wks. - 18 mo., 18 mo. - 3 years, 3 - 5 years, 6+ years), which may not mix with other groups.
- Small Day Care Center - must be registered. Care is provided to three - six children on a regular basis at a location other than a residence.
- School Age Child Care - must be registered. Care is provided on a regular basis to seven or more children who are under 13 years of age and who attend kindergarten or a higher grade. Care is usually provided at a site other than a personal residence.
- Camps – In NYS, summer camps must have a permit from the Department of Health to operate legally. The camp is required to be inspected twice yearly and the inspection reports and required plans are filed at the health department and are available for review.

Do overnight camp expenses qualify for the Grant?
No, overnight camp expenses do not qualify for the Grant, per IRS guidelines for Flexible Spending Accounts. However, day camp expenses are eligible.

Does the cost for extracurricular activities qualify for the Grant?
No, expenses for extracurricular activities (for participation on sports teams, for music lessons, or similar) do not qualify for the Grant per IRS guidelines for Flexible Spending Accounts.

My child attends a private kindergarten. Are those costs eligible?
Costs associated with an educational program for age-eligible school children are not covered by the Grant. However, those expenses associated with before-school and after-school care, even if provided by the same provider, are eligible. For example, the fee schedule for a child, age 6, enrolled in a Montessori-type program might show one rate for a program that is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (the length of a typical school day) and a different rate for enrolling in a program scheduled for 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. (the typical school day plus after-school care). Only the difference in the rates is the portion that is eligible for the Grant, in addition to any before-school care costs.

I’m expecting to add a child to my family. Can I apply even though the child is not in our home yet?
If you or your partner is currently pregnant or you are planning to adopt, you must apply by the September 30, 2015 deadline to be eligible for a Grant any time in 2016, even though your child has not yet been born or has not yet arrived in your home. Within 60 days of both parents’ return-to-work date, you should contact Benefit Services to make sure other benefit plan coverage you need will be in effect for the child. Child Grant awards will be pro-rated based on when the child will be placed in day care and cannot be used to pay for child care prior to both parents’ return to work date. For more information about
the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account, visit the Web at: www.hr.cornell.edu/benefits/fsa.html, e-mail: benefits@cornell.edu or call: (607) 255-3936.

I have a child with a disability-related special need. Can I apply?
Costs associated with specialized care giving, for example a one-on-one aid, required for a child with special needs are covered by the Grant. However, therapy services (speech, physical, occupational or any other therapy provided by a licensed, certified provider) are not.

My special-needs child will be 13 this year. Is she/he still eligible?
Yes, if you have a child age 13 or older and you can provide documentation from a medical doctor that your child has a disability-related special need requiring care beyond the age of 13, you may apply for the Grant. The costs associated with therapy services (for example, for speech, physical, or occupational therapy) are not covered by the Grant.
How to apply

How do I apply for the Grant?
You must complete and submit a Child Care Grant application and supporting documentation on or before September 30, 2015. The online application will be available on September 1, 2015 at www.hr.cornell.edu/life/support/child_care_grant.html.

Applications are not complete until all required documentation is attached to your application and the package is submitted to Benefit Services in person or by sending via U.S. Mail (postmarked by September 30, 2015) to:

   Child Care Grant
   Cornell University
   395 Pine Tree Road
   East Hill Office Building, Suite 130
   Ithaca, New York 14850

A complete application is a printed copy of the online application, a printed copy of the signature page (applicant and spouse/partner must sign) and copies of two most recent pay stubs for the applicant and spouse/partner.

Applications (including required documentation) that do not have a September 30, 2015 (or earlier) U.S. postmark and/or applications received after the September 30, 2015 deadline will not be accepted. Incomplete applications, including any with missing documentation, will not be considered for the Grant and will be returned. For details about the Grant, visit the Cornell University Child Care Grant website or e-mail childcare@cornell.edu or call (607) 255-3936.

What types of documentation do I need to provide?
You will need to provide your two most recent pay stubs as well as the two most recent pay stubs for your spouse/partner (a 1099 or Schedule C for self-employed spouses/partners). You will need to provide information about your child care provider, including the provider’s address and either tax identification number or Social Security number (if known).

What if my spouse/partner other is self-employed?
If your spouse or partner is self-employed, please do your best to anticipate his or her earnings based on information from past years. As verification of income, submit Form 1099 or Schedule C from the self-employed party’s most recent tax return.
Estimating the cost of care

**How do I estimate the cost of care?**
To estimate your cost of care for the 2016 award year, review the child care expenses you had over the last 12 months. If you anticipate a change in the amount or type of care you used, adjust your estimates accordingly. If you anticipate a change in day care costs as a result of a rate increase/decrease and/or a change in your child care provider, adjust your estimates accordingly. If you are moving and do not know what child care provider or what type of care you will be using, use an estimate based on the fees charged by child care providers in the area to which you are moving. In all cases, your reimbursement will be based on what you actually have paid to your provider and documented with receipts.

**I have more than one child who is cared for by one provider, and I pay “family” rate. How do I report that?**
If your provider does not break out costs per child, you should divide the total rate by the number of children included and report the same rate for each child.
What to expect once you’ve applied

How is the decision made on who will receive the Grant?
Once an application has been received, it is then reviewed to ensure that the applicant meets the eligibility criteria, that the child meets eligibility criteria, and that the applicant is requesting Grant funding for a legal child care situation. Those families who meet all of the eligibility criteria will receive a Grant that they can access during the Grant award year, through the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account, as long as they continue to be employed with Cornell University.

I’ve received a Grant before. Can I expect the same amount of Grant money this year?
You should not expect the same amount every year. Since Grant funding is limited and the number of Grant applicants fluctuates from year to year, Grant awards may increase or decrease from one award year to the next. Changes in income, age of the child and child care expenses may also affect the amount of the Grant you receive each year.

Can I estimate how much I might receive?
Yes, you can, but the funding is limited and the amount you might receive may vary each year.

The chart below is based on the financial impact that child care costs place on different income groups. To determine your estimated Grant award:
1) Determine your total gross (before taxes) annual household income.
2) Find the income range for your gross annual household income on the chart.
3) Determine the percent of Grant money associated with the age of your child and, if applicable, the time of year.

Please note that the program is designed to fit the pre-tax provisions in the IRS regulations that govern the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account. As a result, the maximum award is $5,000.

Please note that the estimated Grant amounts in the chart are based on full-time employment (39 hours). Grant funding is limited. We will do our best to meet the targeted amounts shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Category</th>
<th>Infant, Toddler, or Preschooler - year round</th>
<th>School Age (typically 5 years through age 12) School year only</th>
<th>School Age Summer months only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to $34,999</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 - $59,999</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60,000 - $84,999</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$85,000 - $99,999</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $150,000</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Not Covered</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Is there a maximum total amount I might receive?
Yes. The maximum amount of Grant funding that any household may receive is $5,000. This is because Grant awards are distributed by process of reimbursement through the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account and the IRS maximum amount of sheltered income allowed for a Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account is $5,000.

How will I be notified about whether I’ll receive an award?
A decision will be mailed via U.S. mail to your home address. Verify that the university has your correct address on file by going to Workday (https://www.workday.cornell.edu), click on Personal Information, Change Contact Information.

When will I be notified about a decision on whether I’ll receive an award?
You will receive your decision letter prior to the annual benefits open enrollment so that you have time to enroll in the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account. This should occur on or before November 1, 2015.

How will I receive the Grant?
Once your application is processed and an award amount is determined, funds are transferred to your Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account in January 2016. As soon as you have incurred child care expenses, you can request reimbursement. Learn more about reimbursement: https://hr.cornell.edu/benefits/fsa.html
**Will the Grant be paid to my day care provider?**
As long as you file your claim online, you can choose to have the reimbursement paid to your day-care provider.

**How will the Grant affect my Dependent Care Account if I am already contributing my own money to it?**
Once you know the amount of your Cornell Grant, you will be able to calculate whether the Grant will fully fund your needs for the rest of the year. You may still want to contribute from your own salary to your Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account to reach the maximum amount of $5,000 if the Grant award will not cover your expenses.

**When is the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account Open Enrollment Period?**
The Open Enrollment period for **endowed** faculty and staff will be held from November 1 through November 20, 2015; **contract college** faculty and staff will be able to enroll in Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account during the New York State Option Transfer/ Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account Open Enrollment period. The Option Transfer period begins when New York State releases health insurance rates and ends 30 days later.

**When can I expect to begin using my Grant award?**
You can use Grant funds for eligible day care expenses incurred from January 1, 2016 – December 31, 2016. You will have to file a request for reimbursement to receive your funds.

**How do I file a request for reimbursement?**
Learn about filing a request for reimbursement by visiting the web at: [https://hr.cornell.edu/benefits/fsa.html](https://hr.cornell.edu/benefits/fsa.html)

**What should I do if I leave Cornell during this year?**
If you leave Cornell during the award year, be sure to notify Benefit Services via e-mail at childcare@cornell.edu. You should also be sure to request reimbursement for child care only for the time during which you were employed with Cornell University.

**Where can I find more information on the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account as well as on how to file a claim?**
For more information on the Flexible Spending Dependent Care Account, contact Benefit Services at:
395 Pine Tree Road
East Hill Office Building, Suite 130
(607) 255-3936
[http://hr.cornell.edu/benefits/fsa.html](http://hr.cornell.edu/benefits/fsa.html)
childcare@cornell.edu