

**Information & Frequently Asked Questions
For School Year 2025-2026 DoD Fee Policy
*Effective 1 November 2025***

Background:

The MCCA of 1989, codified in Section 568 of the NDAA for 1996, requires DoD to establish DoD-wide Child Care Fees based on Total Family Income (TFI). The Congressional intent is for Families to pay a share of their work-related childcare expenses and DoD to provide fee assistance to lower the cost of care for all Families.

By law, military childcare fees are based on TFI, not military rank or civilian grade. The Military Services subsidize childcare fees on a sliding scale for every Family regardless of rank/grade.

The **Army SY 25-26 Child and Youth Fee EXORD 004-26** addresses patron fees for Child Development Centers (CDCs), School Age Care (SAC), Family Child Care (FCC), Middle School & Teen Programs, SKIES*Unlimited* Instructional Programs, Youth Sports & Fitness, and Army Community Based Programs/Army Fee Assistance.

A. DoD Child Development Program Fee Policy, issued each year, prescribes uniform fee regulations for military child development programs based on Total Family Income (TFI). Standardized fees are used Service-wide for all CYS Services Programs (Full Day, Part Day, Part Time, School Age, Hourly Care and Youth Sports) and Army Fee Assistance.

B. Updated CDP Fee Policy introduces a twelfth (12th) fee category for families with a TFI of \$175,001. Fees for existing categories 1-11 remain unchanged.

C. DoD implemented weekly single fees within TFI categories to provide consistent childcare fees across the Military Services.

D. For Families utilizing childcare around a 4-year-old Pre-Kindergarten program, the school age before and after school care rates will be charged during the school year. Fees for this program will revert to full day CDC pre-school care rates during the summer. *(Not applicable at Fort Leavenworth; USD207 does not provide full-day Pre-K.)*

E. Parents may be charged a supplemental fee for CYS Transportation Services between school and the program. Child Care Fee revenues may not be used to support transportation expenses.

F. Childcare on Army installations is a good value for Soldiers, Families, and the Army.

G. The Army pays a portion of the cost of childcare to help lower the cost for most Families who use Child and Youth Programs.

FAQ:

Q1. What are the major changes in the DoD Child Care Fee EXORD for SY 25-26?

A1: The CDP Fee Policy introduces a twelfth fee category for families with a TFI of \$175,001 and above. Fees for existing categories 1-11 remain unchanged for families whose children are enrolled in regularly scheduled child development center and school age care programs.

Q2. What is Army Fee Assistance?

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A2. Army Fee Assistance (AFA) pays the difference in the installation childcare fee and the civilian childcare fee up to the established civilian childcare provider rate cap. Parents are responsible for paying the installation childcare fee and any civilian childcare provider fees exceeding the established civilian childcare provider rate caps. Future enrollment in AFA will focus resources on Soldiers and Families.

Q3. What is Total Family Income (TFI)?

A3. TFI is defined as all earned income including wages, salaries, tips, special duty pay (flight pay, active-duty demo pay, sea pay), and active duty save pay, long-term disability benefits, voluntary salary deferrals, retirement or other pension income including Social Security Income (SSI) paid to the spouse and VA benefits paid to the surviving spouse before deductions for taxes. TFI calculations must also include quarter's subsistence and other allowances appropriate for the rank and status of military or civilian personnel whether received in cash or in kind. For dual military living in government quarters include Basic Allowances for Housing (BAH) RC/T of the senior member only; for Defense civilian OCONUS include either the housing allowance, or the value of the in-kind housing provided.

When calculating TFI, programs should not include alimony, and child support received by the custodial parent, SSI received on behalf of the dependent child, reimbursements for educational expenses or health and wellness benefits, cost of living (COLA) received in high-cost areas, temporary duty allowances, or reenlistment bonuses. Rather than use the BAH listed on the Leave and Earning Statement (LES), installations must use the Non-Locality Basic Allowance for Housing with Dependents Rate (BAH RC/T) for all members, regardless of whether they live in government housing or off installation, (BAH RC/T chart for the current year). The local BAH rate is used in locations where military members receive less than the BAH RC/T allowance. For dual military members, regardless of whether they reside in government housing or off, use the BAH RC/T with Dependents Rate of the senior member only, for Defense Civilians OCONUS include either the housing allowance or the value of the in-kind housing. Basic Needs Allowance (BNA), if received, is included in TFI calculations.

Q4. How is TFI determined and what forms are required for verification?

A4. The Application for Department of Defense (DoD) Child Care Fees, DD Form 2652 or electronic equivalent will be used to verify TFI as defined in Department of Defense Instruction (DoDI) 6060.02.

Q5. How is the income for individuals who own their own business calculated?

A5. Based on DoD guidance the TFI is calculated using the business net income.

Q6. How is the TFI income calculated for spouses/partners who work on commission and who do not have a previous tax return?

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A6. Based on DoD guidance, individuals who have no employment income history and whose income fluctuates throughout the year must provide an employer estimate of the anticipated earnings. Individuals who are self-employed will be required to provide an estimate of annual earnings.

Q7. How is the TFI calculated for non-related Families or non-married couples and for couples who are geographically separated?

A7. In households where non-related Families are living in the same residence, include the income of all the adults who financially contribute to the welfare of the child. In households where the parents are married or in legal partnership and the custodial parent is geographically separated from the sponsor, including the income of both.

Q8. Does the Army have to follow the Child Care Fee EXORD 004-26 Guidance?

A8. Yes. The Military Child Care Act of 1989, codified in Section 568 of the National Defense Authorization Act for 1996, requires the DoD to establish DoD-wide uniform childcare fees based on TFI for use by all branches of the Service.

Q9. When will the new childcare fees go into effect?

A9. SY 2025-2026 will be implemented on 1 November 2025.

Q10. How are childcare fees determined?

A10. There is no change to the process of determining the fees. DoD established 12 TFI Categories and fees/fee ranges for each category. Parent fees are based on their TFI category.

Q11. What happens if I am unable to pay childcare fees?

A11. Commanders may authorize financial hardship waivers for Families with temporary documented financial hardships. Information is available at the local CYS Services Office.

Q12. Do Families using Army Child Care receive a discount when they have more than one child enrolled?

A12. Yes. The full fee is paid for the child enrolled in the most expensive childcare option and the remaining children receive a 15% Multiple Child Reduction (MCR). The full fee is applied to the most expensive child in the FCC Home when children are enrolled in both FCC and Center Based programs. For details visit the appropriate CYS Services Office. NOTE: DoD contractors and specified space available patrons are not eligible for the MCR. **MCR is applied toward the facility-based program first.**