





## SECTION 4: Authorization Periods

### Specific to this Authorization Agreement:

Authorization Period	
Start Date:	End Date:

This is the period for which THIS agreement is in place. This may be less than the child/family's full authorization period. This agreement may be short term, such as summer only care, or for a longer period of time.

### Family Authorization:

Authorization Period	
Start Date:	End Date:

Authorizations are based on family, not individual child(ren). However, authorizations only include the specific children included in the authorization approval by the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program.

## SECTION 5: Corrections and Updates

This information is being sent to both the listed child's family and the listed provider. Families and providers are asked to submit updates if the included information is incorrect or in need of an update. Please contact the Best Starts for Kids Child Care Subsidy Program at:

For providers: [Providers@BSKchildcare.org](mailto:Providers@BSKchildcare.org) or (206) 339-5570

For families: [Support@BSKchildcare.org](mailto:Support@BSKchildcare.org) or (206) 208-6865

Families may directly [request a change in the amount of authorized care](#).

## SECTION 6: Terms and Conditions for Child Care Providers

**Payment Terms:** The subsidy amount detailed above will be paid directly to the child care provider on behalf of the named child. If the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy does not cover the full cost of the child's care, the provider may charge the parent or guardian the difference.

1. It is the parent's responsibility to negotiate and pay for all fees/tuition not covered by the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy.
2. Non-payment of fees can result in closure of the child's subsidy. Due dates for fees are agreed upon between the parent(s)/guardian(s) and their child care provider.
3. The Best Starts for Kids Subsidy will not pay for the following: Late fees, field trip fees, registration fees, additional days/hours not authorized.
4. Full-time days will be authorized for school-age children during school breaks, per the school-age payment calendar established by the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program. Payment for full-time summer care must be requested, by the family, and approved by the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program.
5. Providers (and families) are expected to notify us if the child is authorized for or using any other subsidy programs, such as Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) supports or regional subsidies. In most cases, use of WCCC will result in non-eligibility for Best Starts for Kids Subsidy payments.

**Attendance Policy:** The provider will be paid the authorized amount if the child attends at least one (1) day during the authorized month and is enrolled for the full month.

1. Repeated excessive absences are a reason for a review of hours of care authorized and can result in reduced hours or closure of a child's subsidy.
2. The parent(s)/guardian(s) and provider set the child's schedule. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must follow the attendance policy agreed upon with the provider when the child enrolls.
3. Providers have a responsibility to report to BrightSpark Early Learning Services, the administrator for the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy, when the child's attendance changes substantially. Please contact us within two weeks of the change at (206) 339-5570 or [providers@bskchildcare.org](mailto:providers@bskchildcare.org).
4. If the child does not attend for two (2) consecutive months, the subsidy will be closed, and the provider will not receive future payment. Payment will not be issued for months of non-attendance. Please also refer to the program's "pause" policy.

**Payment Method and Schedule:** Best Starts for Kids Subsidy payments are issued through direct deposit.

1. Providers who do not already have a direct deposit agreement in place with BrightSpark will be sent a copy of the "new vendor" agreement packet to complete. No payment can be issued without BrightSpark having first received a copy of the program's W-9, DCYF child care license, and banking information. BrightSpark will notify providers if copies of these items are not yet on file.
2. Providers whose circumstances make it necessary to receive a paper check must notify BrightSpark and request alternative accommodation. BrightSpark, the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Administrator, is not responsible for payments lost in the mail, mail theft, or other issues occurring after payment has been placed in the outgoing mail. Please contact us at (206) 339-5570 or [providers@bskchildcare.org](mailto:providers@bskchildcare.org) if your mailed payment is not received. We reserve the right to request your banking information and send all future payments via direct deposit.
3. Payments sent to providers will typically include Best Starts for Kids Subsidy payments for all children enrolled in the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program.
4. The Best Starts for Kids Subsidy may be used to pay for child care provided by Child Care Centers (CCC) or Family Child Care (FCC) programs who are licensed by DCYF and in good standing with the State of Washington. Family, Friend, and Neighbor caregivers are not eligible.

## **SECTION 7: Terms and Conditions for Families**

**Fees and Tuition:** The Best Starts for Kids Subsidy may not cover the full costs for your child care. You may have a "parent/guardian portion" and/or additional fees that must be paid directly to the child care provider by you.

- It is your responsibility to negotiate and pay for all fees not covered by the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy.
- Non-payment of fees can result in closure of your subsidy. Due dates for fees are agreed upon between parent(s)/guardian(s) and their child care provider.
- The Best Starts for Kids Subsidy will not pay for additional expenses, including late fees, field trip fees, registration fees, and additional days/hours not authorized in your subsidy.

- Full-time days will be authorized for school-age children during school breaks, in accordance with the calendar outlining these periods. Families wishing for full-time summer care for school-age children must specifically request this adjustment by contacting the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program.

**Absences:** Your child needs to attend at least one (1) day during the month for your provider to be paid for that authorized month. Months when a child is not enrolled for the full month at a given child care program, will be pro-rated instead of paid in full.

- Repeated and excessive absences are cause for a review of hours of care authorized and can result in reduced hours or closure of your subsidy.
- You set your child's schedule with the child care provider and must follow the attendance policy agreed upon with the provider when the child enrolls.
- If your child does not attend for two (2) consecutive months, your subsidy will be closed, and your provider will not receive future payments. Payments will not be issued to the provider for months in which your child did not attend the program. (Please also see program "pause" policy.)

**Authorization:** Eligibility and subsidy amount is based on address, family income, family size, child age, type of care, and parent(s)/guardian(s) stated child care needs.

- Once authorized, you are not required to report changes in family size or family income until the next reauthorization period. Families are required to report changes in address and type of care.
- Changes that may increase your subsidy amount (i.e., a decrease in income, a new family member) may be reported at any time during the authorization.
- If you do report a change in your family size or income which would make you eligible for Working Connections (WCCC), you will be asked to apply to WCCC and your Best Starts for Kids Subsidy will be closed within 2 months of our notification, unless you submit to us, a copy of your WCCC denial letter within that period of time. Families and providers are required to notify us if WCCC subsidy is authorized. In most cases, Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program enrollment will cease upon use of WCCC subsidy.

**Adjustments:** There may be instances in which the amount awarded will be reduced.

- For school-age care at a center-based program, the paid subsidy amount will never exceed the provider's published rate. For younger children, regardless of program type, or for school-age children attending a family child care program (FCC), the assigned Best Starts subsidy amount may exceed the program's published tuition for that child's age and amount of care used.
- If any provider has a planned closure, the subsidy amount may be reduced for each day of planned closures, based on the child's schedule of care.

**Changes:** Please provide notice of any changes in hours of child care needed, family circumstances or contact information as soon as possible to the Best Starts for Kids Family Access and Support Team by calling or texting (206) 208-6865 or emailing [support@bskchildcare.org](mailto:support@bskchildcare.org).

- Advance notice will help ensure there is no delay in payment to your provider.

**Changing Providers:** The Best Starts for Kids Child Care Subsidy Program must be given at least two (2) weeks advance notice to ensure a smooth transition of subsidy.

- It is the parent(s)/guardian(s) responsibility to report changes to your child care provider and the

Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Team.

- Best Starts for Kids Subsidy expects parent(s)/guardian(s) to follow the provider's guidelines as outlined and agreed upon when giving notice. These may differ from the two-week requirement of the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program.
- When at least two weeks' notice of a provider change is given to the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Team and the current provider, the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Program will pay that provider for the duration of the two week notice period (starting from the date notification was submitted to Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Team), as long as that two weeks falls within a month that child attended the child care program. No payment will be made to any provider, for months or portions of a month, that that child did not attend that specified child care program.
- Failure to provide the required notice to the provider may result in the family being responsible for any incurred fees according to the provider's policies.
- If switching providers, all fees with your current provider must be paid in full, or a payment plan must be in place and in good standing before a subsidy transfer will be authorized. Outstanding balances with a provider may affect the family's eligibility to switch to a new provider.
- If you are staying with the same provider but will be using a different site/location (short or long term), report this change to the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Team at least two weeks in advance. These changes impact how payment is made. For example: *changing from Childcare ABC at Tree location to Childcare ABC at Ocean location requires notifying us.*

**Subsidy Time Frame:** Your Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Authorization is only valid from the start date to the end date listed on the Subsidy Authorization Agreement.

- Notice of recertification will be sent to families by email at least six weeks before the end date of your subsidy. If you need paperwork sent by mail, an official request must be made in advance to the FAS Team.
- Recertification materials must be returned by the due date given by the FAS Team. If you need support with the recertification process, we can connect you to a FAS Team member.
- Failure to submit recertification materials by the due date can result in an interruption, or termination of your child care subsidy.
- To extend your Best Starts for Kids Subsidy Authorization, Best Starts for Kids Subsidy eligibility must be established during the recertification.

**Subsidy Closure:** Your Best Starts for Kids Subsidy may be closed for any of the following reasons:

- Falsification of information, including not providing all required information to determine your eligibility, providing false information, or falsifying documents.
- Change in income, family size or address resulting in family eligibility for another subsidy program (i.e., Working Connections Child Care).
- Failure to follow program procedures, including notifying staff of changes, returning recertification paperwork, etc.
- Non-payment of fees to the child care provider, failure to set up a payment plan for fees owed, or that the payment plan is not in good standing.

Best Starts for Kids Child Care Subsidy will only pay subsidies to child care homes (Family Child Care programs) and centers licensed by the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Best Starts for Kids Child Care Subsidy does not license, endorse, or recommend any particular provider. We cannot

assure that a provider gives quality child care. In an effort to meet the child care needs of families, the Family Access and Support (FAS) Team may refer families to contracted child care centers or homes; however, the ultimate choice of child care providers is the sole responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are urged to carefully interview and check references before leaving a child in care. To review DCYF licensing history of a child care provider including any complaints, you can complete a provider search at: <https://findchildcarewa.org/>.

## **SECTION 8: Improper and Overpayment Policies**

### **Improper Payments**

There may be instances where the wrong provider is paid, the wrong amount is paid, or a provider is paid on behalf of a family or provider that no longer qualifies. The following scenarios are outlined below.

#### **Incorrect subsidy amount paid**

If an underpayment of the subsidy amount is issued to a child care provider, a note will be applied to the particular case and payment month, and a corrected payment will be issued. If an overpayment of the subsidy amount is issued to a child care provider, a note will be applied to the particular case and payment month. If the child is continuing care, the overage will be subtracted from the next month's subsidy. If the child is not continuing care, the child care provider will be asked to repay the difference.

#### **Duplication of benefits**

A duplication of benefits occurs when a child care provider is paid more than one time for the same care provided or the child care provider receives a payment from WCCC (or another subsidy) and the Best Starts for Kids Child Care subsidy for the same care. In both cases, a request for repayment will be issued to the child care provider.

#### **Paid to the incorrect provider**

If payment is made to an incorrect provider, a note will be applied to the particular case and payment month. If the provider has children with continuing care, the overage will be applied to the next month's subsidy for a different child. If no children are continuing care with that provider, the child care provider will be asked to repay the improper payment.

#### **Paid to ineligible family or ineligible provider**

If payment is made on behalf of a family who is no longer eligible or to a provider that is no longer eligible, a request for repayment will be issued to the child care provider.

#### **Intentional payment misrepresentation**

If it is determined that a family or provider has attempted to defraud the program with intentional misrepresentation, a review board will evaluate the facts and circumstances of the situation and recommend the next steps. The review board will include at least one representative from King County, BrightSpark, and the FAS team.

#### **Grievances/Appeals/Denials**

A family or provider that suspects an error in the review, eligibility determination, or subsidy amount calculation is able to submit a claim for review. Families can request a re-review of any part of the process through their FAS Team case manager via phone, email, or text message. Each appeal request initiates a complete review of the family's then-current stage. If a correction is determined to be needed, an update will be relayed to the managing FAS Team member to communicate to the family.

If a family receives a denial letter and has questions or wants to request a re-review, FAS Team may submit a ticket to the Best Starts Subsidy Lead Team so that the request can be addressed promptly. Providers can request a re-review through the Best Starts Subsidy provider phone or at [providers@bskchildcare.org](mailto:providers@bskchildcare.org). The Best Starts Subsidy Billing Team will navigate the request. If a correction is determined to be needed, an update will be relayed to the managing FAS Team member to communicate to the family and directly to the provider, and award decisions will be adjusted.

## SECTION 9: Authorization Signatures

### Family Agreement

I am the parent or guardian of the above-named child and wish to receive Best Starts for Kids Child Care Subsidy assistance to be applied toward my child's tuition at the child care program named above.

I understand that payment will be sent to the child care provider listed above and that I am responsible for any tuition or fees not covered by the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy award.

- I have carefully read and agree to the terms and conditions as outlined in the Subsidy Authorization Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

### Provider Agreement

I am currently authorized to enroll children. I have registered the above-named child in my program and agree to accept payment from the Best Starts for Kids Subsidy. If requested, I acknowledge that I will need to provide proof of the services for which I request payment in the form of attendance records. I understand the maximum amount of payments may change depending on attendance and enrollment.

- I have carefully read and agree to the terms and conditions as outlined in the Subsidy Authorization Agreement.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Program Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
MERIT Provider ID

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provider/ Primary Contact Name, Printed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Provider Signature