

In Brief: School-age child care is an important support for working parents. Parents who work need a reliable and safe environment for their elementary school-aged children. School-age child care provides a supportive and secure environment that encourages healthy development, including academic support when necessary.

Working Parents with School-Age Children

Mothers with school-age children have long participated in the labor force at higher rates than moms with younger children. Recent data from June 2023 shows that 83.1% of mothers with children ages 5-14 in Virginia were employed.

In 2022 in Virginia,

- 397,937 children age 6-12 had working parents

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey, 1 Year Estimates.

While child care for school-age children is often not as expensive as infant or toddler care, it still represents a significant expense in the family budget. For example, in Virginia, the average annual price of school-age care during the school year is \$9,000, and the average rate for care during the summer months is \$195 per week.

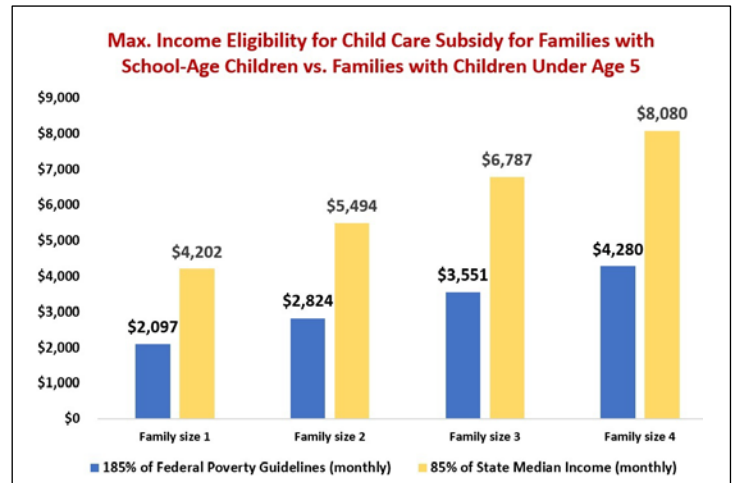
The other challenge facing working parents of elementary school children is care during school holidays, teacher workdays, as well as finding child care or camp during summer breaks. Fees for full-day care are often in addition to the regular weekly payments they make for before & after school care.

Virginia Child Care Subsidy Law

Under current law, families with young children under age 5 qualify for child care subsidy if their household income falls within 85% of state median income (SMI). School-age siblings in families with children under age 5 are eligible for child care subsidy as well. However, families with only older school-age children are not eligible for subsidy unless their income is much lower.



Families with school-age children can receive subsidy if their income falls within 150% to 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL), depending on their location. This level of eligibility is considerably lower than the 85% of state median income for families with children under age 5. As a result, these families have to pay thousands of dollars more out of pocket, making child care far less affordable and accessible for them.



Child Care Aware of Virginia Recommends:

Expand Child Care Subsidy Assistance for families who need help affording child care.

- ✓ **Extend current law that allows families with children under age 5 to qualify for subsidy with household income up to 85% of state median income.** This provision expires on June 30, 2024.
- ✓ **Expand income eligibility to support families with school-age children (5-12) up to 85% of state median income.**