



# SERVICES GUIDE 2021

## IT TAKES A VILLAGE

BY LINDSEY BARK  
Reporter

Parents or guardians who need financial aid for child care can apply to the Cherokee Nation Child Care and Development subsidy program.

Subsidy aids with child care services by helping pay for the enrollment of a child or children at a child care facility.

"The subsidy piece, which is parents applying for subsidy and then we turn around and pay those providers as well. Subsidy has two parts, the client side and the provider side," Child Care and Development subsidy manager Bridget Tobey said.

Clients can apply online at [childcare.cherokee.org](https://childcare.cherokee.org) or in person at one of five locations in Tahlequah, Stilwell, Pryor, Sallisaw and Catoosa.

Eligibility requirements include that a parent or guardian must be working, attending school, in need of protective services or actively seeking a job; the household income must be at or below the amount listed based on family size; parents and/or child must have proof of citizenship with a federally recognized tribe; must live within the CN reservation; must use a child care facility contracted with the CN; and have the list of other required documents needed to apply.

"The documents that they need are like birth certificate, the proof of citizenship in a federally recognized tribe, income verification and proof of address, which is like a utility bill. Then we have three forms – employment verification, client responsibility and client information," Tobey said.

Cherokee Nation Child care and Development staff at the Tahlequah location, from left, are accounting assistant I Tashina Snell, subsidy caseworker III Donna Whitner-Cowan, subsidy manager Bridget Tobey, accounting assistant III Ronnita McClellmore-Bluebird and subsidy caseworker III Andrea Cloud.  
LINDSEY BARK/CHEROKEE PHOENIX



When a subsidy is approved, a client is on the program for 12 months before having to re-apply.

Tobey said she encourages clients to look at the income guidelines when applying. Household incomes must be at or below 85% of the state median income. Clients may also be eligible for a work-related expense deduction of 35% of their total gross income.

Child care and Development is contracted with 400 providers that include relative providers, family child care homes and child care facilities.

"The relative providers have to be related to the child by grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling over 18, and they can't live in the home with the child. So it has to be in a separate home," Tobey said.

Family child care homes are a provider who has a facility in their home and are licensed to care for up to 12 children.

For more than a year due to the pandemic, Child care

and Development has temporarily changed policies for parent copays and paying based on enrollment to child care providers.

"The pandemic happened in March (2020) and by April we were paying parents co-pays. We started that in April 2020 and we've been doing it ever since," Tobey said. "Previously, prior to the pandemic, a child needed to attend 15 days and we would pay the provider for the whole month. But when the pandemic started, we reduced that to zero days."

She said this helped when children stayed home with parents to quarantine when the virus hit households. Provider pay was funded through the federal CARES Act and other grant funding.

"Overall the feedback from parents has been great," Tobey said. "They've basically had child care free for over a year now. Any time I talk to one of them they're very appreciative of that."

For information, visit <https://childcare.cherokee.org/subsidy/> or call 918-453-5300.

## Do you need help paying for child care?

You may qualify for Cherokee Nation Child Care & Development Child Care Subsidy!

### ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:

- Parents must be working/going to school
- Meet income guidelines
- Proof of citizenship in a federally recognized tribe
- Live within 14-county Cherokee Nation reservation
- Children must be age 12 or under (children with special needs up to age 19)

918-453-5300

[childcare.cherokee.org/subsidy](https://childcare.cherokee.org/subsidy)

