

Childcare in New Hampshire: A Resource Guide for Families, Providers, Businesses & Advocates

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STRAFFORD
Regional Planning Commission

Parents and Families:

Find quality, affordable childcare and explore financial help through programs like the [NH Child Care Scholarship](#). Learn about resources like [NH Connections](#), [Waypoint](#), and [the Parent Information Center](#).

Childcare Providers & Economic Stakeholders:

Get tools to run or support a childcare program from groups like [SELA](#), [SBDC](#) and [ApprenticeshipNH](#). Learn how to accept Child Care Scholarships and join the [Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan](#) for supporting employees.

Policy Advocates & Community Planners:

Support childcare access with advocacy groups like the [NH Child Care Advisory Council](#) and [Chamber of Mothers](#). Tap into research from the [NH Fiscal Policy Institute](#) and [Carsey School](#) to understand workforce needs and economic impacts.



For Families: Accessing Resources and Financial Assistance

How can I find quality, affordable child care?

Managed by Child Care Aware of NH, [NH Connections](#) provides consumer education on what makes a quality child care program, how to assess options, and virtual sessions on child care selection.

Need help with registering for or determining eligibility for the NH Child Care Scholarship?

The New Hampshire Child Care Scholarship is managed by the NH Department of Health and Human Services. A user friendly guide to the program and eligibility [can be found here](#).

Income Eligibility Levels

To qualify for help paying for child care, your household income needs to fall within one of three steps based on family size:

Step 1: Very Low Income (<100% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

Step 2: Low Income (100% to 138% of Federal Poverty Guidelines)

Step 3: Moderate Income (Above 138% of Federal Poverty Guidelines but Below 85% of the State Median Income)

How can I apply for child care financial assistance?

NH Child Care Scholarship Program:

Offers financial aid to eligible families for licensed or approved child care. To apply, visit NH Easy Gateway to Services, call 1-844-ASK-DHHS, or visit a local DHHS office.

New Hampshire Freedom Accounts:

Funding of up to \$3,700 for New Hampshire families with children from 5-20 years old and earning up to 350% of the poverty line. Money can be used for tuition, tutoring, online learning, educational supplies, and more.

Temporary Assistance for Needy

Families: TANF can be used for childcare assistance for dependents under the age of 6 through payments to providers. Eligible families are under 250% of the federal poverty line.



What support is available for families with children with disabilities?

Parent Information Center NH: Provides guidance and resources.

Waypoint: Offers community-based family services and resource centers.

For Child Care Providers and Businesses: Enhancing Operations and Cost Savings

How can I start my childcare business?

Small Business Development Center:

SBDC provides business services for small businesses in New Hampshire.

Find their website [here](#).

Government Services: Cities and towns within the Strafford Region have a variety of economic development and business service departments within their governments. Two prominent agencies are within the Cities of Dover and Rochester, which provide business services for new or existing organizations. Contact [Dover offices here](#) and [Rochester offices here](#).



How can I receive specialized training and assistance?

NH Preschool Technical Assistance

Network: Provides training in special education for early childhood educators.

NH Connections Provider Support:

Offers professional development, technical assistance, licensing info, and best practice guidance.

Early Care and Education Association

(ECEA): A resource network for early childhood professionals in the Upper Valley region of Vermont and New Hampshire. ECEA provides professional development, networking opportunities, and business support for childcare providers.

How can I accept child care scholarships?

Enroll through **NH Connections Information System (NHCIS)** by submitting required forms and completing staff background checks.

How Can I Offer an Apprenticeship Program?

If you are a childcare provider interested in offering an apprenticeship, *ApprenticeshipNH* provides support in developing and implementing programs tailored to your workforce needs.

Connect with ApprenticeshipNH: Visit the ApprenticeshipNH website and contact a regional program specialist to discuss how an apprenticeship program can fit your organization's needs.

Develop a Training Plan: Work with ApprenticeshipNH to outline a structured training program that includes:

- On-the-job learning
- Classroom instruction (often provided through local colleges or training programs).
- Wage increases at key milestones

Apprenticeships can be funded through grants, employer contributions, or state programs. Employers may receive financial incentives or tax credits for participating.

Recruit & Register Apprentices

Employers can hire new employees as apprentices or enroll existing staff looking to upskill. ApprenticeshipNH will assist in recruiting, onboarding, and ensuring compliance with state and federal apprenticeship guidelines.

How can I join a Childcare apprenticeship?

Visit the **ApprenticeshipNH website** to see current apprenticeship openings and contact a regional specialist to learn about upcoming opportunities.

Apply for an Apprenticeship: Interested individuals can apply directly through participating childcare centers, preschools, or organizations offering ECE apprenticeships.

Begin Paid On-the-Job Training: Apprentices work full-time or part-time while receiving structured training from experienced childcare professionals. Wages increase as apprentices complete key milestones in their training.

Complete the Apprenticeship & Earn Credentials: Upon completion, apprentices receive a nationally recognized credential and may qualify for lead teacher or director positions in early childhood education. Some apprenticeship programs count toward state licensing requirements, making it easier to advance in the field.

How do I participate in the Granite State Paid Family Leave Plan to support my employees?

Decide to Opt-In: Employers choose whether to enroll in the program and offer paid family leave insurance.

Benefits: Employees can take up to 6 weeks of paid leave at 60% of their wages for:

- Birth, adoption, or fostering of a child
- Caring for a seriously ill family member
- Military caregiving responsibilities
- Personal serious health condition

Enroll Through MetLife: New Hampshire has contracted MetLife to administer the plan. Employers can sign up through MetLife to select coverage options. Employers can:

- Fully cover the insurance premiums for employees
- Split the cost with employees
- Offer the insurance as an employee-paid option

Claim the Tax Credit: Employers who contribute to employee premiums receive a 50% tax credit on their Business Profits Tax (BPT) or Business Enterprise Tax (BET).

Communicate the Benefit to Employees: Employers must inform employees about the program, eligibility, and how to access paid leave when needed.



Are there any shared cost-saving networks I can join?

State Early Learning Alliance of NH (SELA):

A shared services network offering significant cost and time savings. Benefits include discounts for pooled purchasing, partnerships with local businesses, and business management and licensing support.

***For Policy Advocates and Community Planners:
Tools for Advocacy and Planning***

How can I influence child care policies?

NH Child Care Advisory Council (NHCCAC):

Advises the DHHS commissioner on child care policies and laws.

Want to attend meetings? Meetings happen bi-monthly in Concord, NH. Contact Early Learning NH at (603) 226-7900 for details or to share concerns.

What is the Chamber of Mothers?

The Chamber of Mothers is a national advocacy organization dedicated to improving policies that support mothers and families. Their work includes advocating for paid family leave, affordable childcare, maternal healthcare, and workplace protections.

They mobilize parents, collaborate with lawmakers, and run public awareness campaigns to push for meaningful policy changes.

Is there a local chapter in New Hampshire?

Yes! The Chamber of Mothers has a New Hampshire chapter based in Portsmouth.

This chapter focuses on advocacy efforts at the state and national levels, providing a space for local parents to connect, organize, and take action on issues affecting families in the region.

How can I get involved?

There are several ways to get involved with the Chamber of Mothers:

- Join the Portsmouth chapter to connect with other local advocates.
- Participate in advocacy campaigns by signing petitions, writing to lawmakers, or attending events.
- Support fundraising efforts to help sustain their work.
- Spread awareness by sharing their initiatives on social media and within your community.

To learn more, visit [the Chamber of Mothers website](#), where you can find details on membership, upcoming events, and current advocacy priorities.



Where can I find data and advocacy resources?

- **New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute:** NHFPI has a wide array of resources on childcare. Read about the economic impact of the childcare shortage, the fragile economics of this sector, the state of childcare in the state, and more.
- **Carsey School of Public Policy:** UNH's policy school published the Granite Guide to Early Childhood series. Read about families' needs, a childcare landscape analysis, the childcare workforce, and more.
- **Zoning Atlas:** Saint Anselm College produced a comprehensive zoning atlas, which includes a section on the zoning of home-based childcare. This is a good representation of where home-based businesses are allowed to operate, relevant after the passage of HB1567.

