

September 20, 2023

SALEM, ORE. - Today, the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) announced they will pause Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program enrollment and open a waitlist due to increased demand and limited funding. Families who believe they are eligible for ERDC should apply by **November 3, 2023 at 11:59 p.m.**

Families currently receiving ERDC support will continue to receive benefits after November 3, 2023.

Enrollment in the ERDC program, which is funded by both federal and state investments, has grown by 52% in the 2021-2023 biennium due to expansions in family eligibility and program improvements. Enrollment has grown 22% in the last two months alone due to changes that include lower copays, enrollment-based pay for child care providers, opening the program to non-working students, extending eligibility timeframes, and minimizing the number of reasons a family may lose their ERDC benefits.

Families with specific needs outlined in [Oregon rule](#) can still enroll in ERDC after the waitlist is implemented:

- Families recently or currently receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS) will still be able to enroll in ERDC.
- Families will also bypass the waitlist if they are referred by the Child Welfare division of the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) or are reapplying for ERDC within two months of benefits ending.
- Families currently receiving ERDC will continue to receive benefits after November 3, 2023.

“Every family should have access to affordable child care options, and there has been a lot of great work done to expand eligibility for this important program,” **Governor Tina Kotek** said. “This means we need more state funding for ERDC – at least \$50 million more this biennium – if we’re going to meet the demand for child care assistance across the state. There have been productive conversations with legislative leaders about addressing the funding gap in the next session.”

“The Employment Related Day Care program is working better for families, which is a really good thing,” said **Alyssa Chatterjee**, director of DELIC, the new state agency that began overseeing ERDC on July 1, 2023. “The successful expansion and improvement of the program has demonstrated what families already know: Oregonians depend on child care to keep our economy running. When we invest in early education and child care, we invest in families and our current workforce while simultaneously investing in our collective future. We are working closely with the Legislature to identify more funding and are focused on connecting families to other available programs in the

meantime.”

ERDC currently supports about 14,000 families across the state in paying for child care. Families earning up to 200% of the federal poverty level (e.g., up to \$5,000 per month for a [family of four](#)) pay a small copay based on income and can enroll with a provider that accepts ERDC.

Once more funding becomes available and enrollment drops to a sustainable level, families will be selected from the waitlist based on the date they were added. The first to apply will be the first selected for eligibility screening and potential enrollment. Once a family is selected from the waitlist, they will receive a notice inviting them to apply for ERDC within 45 days. The waitlist is likely to be in place for at least 18 months, depending on the level of investment and the rate at which families leave the program. DELC will provide regular updates to families added to the waitlist.

Families can apply for ERDC by November 3, 2023 at 11:59 p.m. in the following ways:

- Visit Benefits.Oregon.gov
- Go to their [local office](#)
- Call 1-800-699-9075

Families who need support paying for child care after November 3, 2023 are encouraged to reach out to [211](#) or their local [Early Learning Hub](#) to apply for other affordable, high-quality child care and early learning programs through DELC, such as [Preschool Promise](#) and [Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten](#). Families with specific needs listed above can still enroll after November 3, 2023 and will not be affected by the waitlist. [Go to Oregon.gov/DELC/ERDC](https://Oregon.gov/DELC/ERDC) to learn more.

About the Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care

The Department of Early Learning and Care’s mission is to foster coordinated, culturally appropriate, and family-centered services that recognize and respect the strengths and needs of all children, families, and early learning and care professionals. More information about DELC is available at Oregon.gov/DELC. You can also connect with DELC

on [Facebook](#) or sign up for [news alerts and updates](#).

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