

COLUMBIA COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
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FINANCE

October 30, 2025

Dear Columbia County Families and Providers,

Columbia County is currently assessing the amount of childcare assistance funding available to support our community, as well as our current rate of spending. The demand for assistance is exceeding the level of state funding we have been allocated due to the following key factors:

1. NYS reduced the parent share of cost to 1%. Previously, parents were responsible for up to 10%.
2. NYS expanded eligibility to 85% of the State Median Income. This change has significantly increased the number of families eligible for assistance.
3. NYS now authorizes providers to submit up to 80 absences per child per year.
4. Federal regulations require that there is no ability to re-determine eligibility during the minimum 12-month eligibility period, regardless of temporary changes in the ongoing status of the child's parent as working or attending a job training or educational program.

Due to these policy changes and the increased enrollment in the program, Columbia County must pause the childcare assistance program. Effective November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 the Child Care Assistance Program in Columbia County will establish a waitlist due to lack of funding. This affects both new applications and recertification for assistance. **We are still accepting applications but please be aware complete applications will be placed on a waitlist until funding becomes available.** The Child Care Assistance Program regrets the impact this will have on the community, parents, and providers. We will continue to advocate for our families.

Columbia County has received a waiver from the state that will allow us to continue to serve the following recipients without impact:

- (a) families experiencing homelessness;
- (b) families with very low income (an income level up to 300 percent of the State income standard);  
and
- (c) families with children who have special needs.

Foster Care families and families receiving temporary assistance will have their child care assistance cases continue without impact.

The Columbia County Child Care Assistance Program recognizes the difficulties this situation may pose for families and providers. We remain dedicated to supporting you during this transition and will continue to share updates as new information becomes available.

Sincerely,

Robert Gibson  
Commissioner

Columbia County Department of Social Services