



The Play Times

Tip Sheet + Resources

Playtime staff and trained volunteers protect your children's rights to learn and play by partnering with shelters across the Washington, D.C., region. We create bright, safe spaces with fun activities for children and give parents a break. Play reduces stress, increases confidence and resiliency, and contributes to healthy brain development.



All About the Child Tax Credit

Changes to the Child Tax Credit has been in the news lately, and you may have more questions than you have answers. Here's some helpful information for you.

What is it?

The Child Tax Credit is a tax benefit for families with children. You normally claim it in your annual income tax return. This year it has been increased and half of the total amount is being sent to families in advance, through monthly payments, beginning July 15. The rest will be a lump sum with next year's tax return.

Who is eligible?

Nearly all Playtime families qualify. You don't need a permanent address to get these payments.

You must have a child under age 18 at the end of 2021; claimed the Child Tax Credit on your 2019 or 2020 tax return; or given the IRS your information in 2020 to receive the stimulus payment using the non-filers tool.

How much money will I get?

Monthly payments are up to \$300 per child under age 6 and \$250 per child ages 6 to 17.

Okay, how do I get it?

If you've filed tax returns for 2019 or 2020, or if you signed up to receive a stimulus check, you will get this tax relief automatically. You do not need to sign up or take any extra action. Automatic deposits for the credit will be labeled as CHILDCTC in your bank account.

If you did not file taxes, you can still file a 2020 return with the IRS even though it is after the May 17 deadline. If you don't owe any money, you won't face a late fee.

If you don't have a permanent address, the easiest way to get the monthly child tax credit payments is to elect direct deposit when you file your taxes.

If you don't use direct deposit, you will receive payment by mail around the same time each month. You can add or change your bank account information through the IRS's Child Tax Credit Update Portal online if needed. If you don't have a permanent address, you can put down an alternate address, for example, a friend or relative, a trusted service provider like a shelter, day-care center, or transitional housing program.

What if I didn't file taxes last year and don't intend to, can I still get the credit?

Absolutely! You can sign up to receive the Child Tax Credit through the IRS Non-filer Sign-up Tool at www.irs.gov/credits-deductions/child-tax-credit-non-filer-sign-up-tool.

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First Day of School!

D.C. Public Schools are going back to in-person learning this fall.

- Classes are back for grades 1-12 starting Monday, August 30, 2021.
- Pre-K first day of classes will be Thursday, Sept. 2, 2021.
- Upcoming Holiday/No School Day: Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 6, 2021.

Get Ready for Back to School

How to Enroll

Complete Back-to-School Enrollment forms online if you have an active email address, or take the enrollment package to your child's school.

You'll find all you need at enrolldcps.dc.gov, including the enrollment package.

For help: call the DCPS Enrollment Team Hotline at (202) 478-5738 or email enroll@k12.dc.gov.



Distance Learning Options

DCPS will offer virtual instruction for a limited number of students who meet medical eligibility requirements, including a form filled out by a doctor or nurse practitioner. Virtual instruction based on medical need will be available across all grades from PK-12.

Afterschool Programs are also Back

Afterschool programs run each day after school until 6:15 p.m. at no cost; you must be enrolled in school to register. Spots are filled by a first-come, first-served basis. Enroll online or by calling the Out of School Time Programs at (202) 442-5002.

Covid-19 Safety at School

D.C. Public Schools are using a layered system to best protect children and teachers coming back to school. This includes HVAC enhancements for well ventilated classrooms, required mask/face coverings, daily "Ask, Ask, Look" health screenings for students and teachers, separating desks and tables for as much social distancing as possible, enhanced cleaning protocols, and limiting large group activities. PPE will be provided to students. Visit: dcpsreopenstrong.com/health/students.

Getting Vaccinated Before Returning

Though the COVID-19 vaccine is currently not required to attend school next year, DCPS is encouraging vaccination. Pop-up clinics will be open at schools throughout August and September, and as a free incentive, youth can select a VISA gift card or AirPods. Get details at dcpsreopenstrong.com/vaccines.

About the Child Tax Credit

Continued from other side

Receiving Child Tax Credit payments is not considered income for any family. So, it will not change the amount you receive in other Federal benefits including unemployment insurance, Medicaid, SNAP, SSI, SSDI, TANF, WIC, Section 8, or Public Housing.

When will I start getting payments?

If you are already signed up you may have gotten your first payment already! Payments will arrive in your bank account on the 15th of every month, or around that time by mail, until the end of 2021. If you signed up for monthly payments after July 15, the amounts you receive will include what you missed.

Tips to Help Your Child Adjust

Some kids might be a little apprehensive about going back to school, and that's okay! We've been out of the classroom a long time and returning to the daily routines with new protocols in place can be stressful.

Ask your child how they are feeling about going back to school. This could be a great time for them to share with you what they are excited about, and for you both to think about what may be worrying them. Discussing their worries about what's changed can be helpful.

Planning ahead can decrease stress. Talk through what transportation will look like, get on a good sleep schedule, and take time to go over past homework assignments to get back in the mood for learning.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. Let the school know if your child is struggling with the transition so you can all brainstorm ways to help make this easier for them.

For support, visit: dcpsreopenstrong.com.

Virtual Events for Parents

Visit dcps.dc.gov and click on Parent University for virtual workshops to help you navigate back-to-school season.

- August 10 at 5:30 p.m. – **Getting My Child Ready for School** (all grades)
- August 17 at 5:30 p.m. – **Accelerating Learning In and Out of the Classroom**
- August 19 at 5:30 p.m. – **Mentally Preparing Myself & My Child for the New School Year**