

Frequently Asked Questions

Before & After School Childcare

What's new?

Over the past few years, CUPF has made (or will be making) the following changes to the before and after school childcare program and webpage based on feedback from childcare providers and school communities:

- Posted a [projected bid cycle](#) for schools over the next seven years;
- Posted a [list of the current and previous childcare providers](#) at schools;
- Posted a [flow chart illustrating the bid process timeline](#);
- Provided and will continue to provide an in-depth debriefing session with childcare providers upon request after the annual bid process is complete;
- Streamlined the committee rating forms for applications and interviews;
- Gave providers an opportunity to give a 10-minute presentation at the beginning of interviews so they could share additional information about their program;
- Created a uniform, online survey for each school community up for bid to provide feedback on the current before and after school childcare provider and what they would like from a provider in general;
- CUPF became a non-voting member of Montgomery County Commission on Child Care; and
- For the FY17 bid:
 - revised the application form to request middle school experience (if applying for a middle school) and updated the fee schedule section for greater clarity; and
 - applications will be completely electronic (providers still can submit a hard copy, if desired).

How often are before and after school programs at Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) up for bid?

The programs are up for bid at least every seven years once a provider is selected. Schools with providers in place longer than seven years that have not yet gone through the current bid process will be included in the next bid.

If a provider is selected through the bid process, is it automatically at the school until the next bid process?

No, but a provider is typically at the school until the next bid process as long as it provides quality service at the school, maintains insurance, and their Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) license.* However, if there are issues with quality from a significant number of parents, the principal can ask the provider to perform a parent satisfaction survey. If

repeated conflict medication efforts have not resolved the problem(s) and a majority of parents of enrolled children indicate a high level of dissatisfaction, the principal may request a rebid for the next school year after reviewing the issues (Section 8c, [Executive Regulation 15-14AMV](#)).

**It should be noted that when a provider is selected, the provider is on a year-to-year permit during the school year– not a lease or a contract.*

How do I know when my school is up for bid?

The [projected bid cycle through 2023](#) is located on CUPF's childcare webpage. Selected schools/principals and providers are notified by CUPF at the start of the school year.

How long have before and after school childcare providers been at each school? How many schools are these providers at?

[A complete list](#) of all the providers by school and who the previous provider was is posted; this includes how long the current provider has been at a particular school. This same list also has a second section which lists all of the schools each provider is currently at (starts on page 3).

My school's not on the list of current providers at schools. How does a before and after school childcare program get started at a school?

If there is a significant interest by parents in the school and the principal agrees, the principal can ask CUPF to include the school in next year's bid.

How can I become a before and after school childcare provider at a Montgomery County Public School?

All interested childcare providers must be licensed by the Maryland State Department of Education (more information can be found at their [website](#) or you can call their regional office at 240-314-1400).

The before and after school childcare providers are selected by the school community using a competitive application process that typically begins in mid-November and is open through mid-December. A request for applications for schools currently up for bid is announced in the Washington Post and on the Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) [childcare page](#).

Who selects the before and after school shared space childcare provider?

A selection committee, which is representative of the community, reviews all the applications received and interviews the highest rated providers before making their decision.

How is the selection committee formed?

Selection committee members are appointed by the principal or his/her designee. The principals or their designee is asked to form a committee that represents the school administration (example - principal or assistant-principal, building services manager, and teachers), PTA president or PTA members, parents who use or may use or previously used these services (at least one member must fall in this category), or others who the principal feels can provide value to the process. There must be a minimum of five members and a maximum of nine. Each committee member must to attend all meetings and sign a nondisclosure statement certifying confidentiality, objectivity and absence of a financial interest in any of the applicant organizations.

How can I be involved in the bid process?

There are plenty of opportunities for the entire school community to be involved in the bid process. If a school is up for bid, the principal and the current childcare provider will send a survey to the school community for feedback on the current provider and what the community would like a childcare provider to offer in general. This information will be reviewed by the childcare selection committee.

If parents, school staff, or other members of the school community want to be more involved, they can ask the principal if they can be part of the childcare selection committee. This involves attending an orientation, an application review meeting, and interviews. Each meeting is approximately two hours long (interviews may be longer). Members are also required to rate childcare applications on their own (an average of nine applications per school) before meeting as a group.

How long does the before and after school bid process take?

About seven months. Principals are officially notified that their school is up for bid in September. The principals reach out to their school community for feedback and ask for childcare selection committee volunteers in the fall. CUPF will post the bid in mid-November for 30 days. The committee orientations, meetings, and interviews will take place between January and early April. The decisions for each school will be posted on CUPF's childcare webpage within five days after the selection committee makes their decision.

Is there a limit on how many applications a child care provider may submit or on the number of schools served?

No, there is no limit on the number of applications a childcare provider can submit or on the number of sites they can be selected to offer their program. However, each provider should recognize their limitations, if any, and how those limitations may affect their ability to provide quality services.

I've noticed that at some schools, there are multiple childcare providers. How's that possible?

Only one before and after school childcare provider is selected per school through the CUPF bid process. However, there may be another provider in a school *besides* the one providing before and after school childcare for a similar purpose. Here's a breakdown of the entities and their programs:

- **Community Use of Public Facilities** – manages placement of the before and after school childcare program for school age children in shared space (such as the all-purpose room/cafeteria in a school). Enrollment is only for the students of the school.
- **Department of Health and Human Services** – selects providers to offer all-day childcare primarily for infants through age five in space dedicated at a school for childcare (in the school or in a modular unit on MCPS premises; integrated space use). HHS also manages programs at closed schools and other public buildings. For the programs at schools, this space is not used during the school day by MCPS and enrollment is open to the public.
- **Montgomery County Public Schools** – selects providers for all-day childcare primarily for infants through age five in classroom space or other areas of a school or a modular unit on MCPS premises (exclusive space use). The spaces in the schools are available due to lower enrollment at a school; once enrollment increases, the space may be needed for instructional purposes. Enrollment is open to the public.

What are the benefits of the bid process?

There are many benefits to a competitive bid process, including:

- Supports quality childcare services, competitive pricing, and an enhanced level of responsiveness to schools and parents;
- Selection of a provider who meets Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) licensing requirements, has registered with Maryland Excels (the state's accreditation program), and accepts both state and county childcare subsidies;
- Reaffirms the importance of equal and fair access to opportunities for use of County public space; and
- Creates opportunities for new providers.

What is the role of CUPF?

CUPF administers the bid process by creating various forms and instructions for use by the applicants and selection committees, posting of the advertisement in the newspaper and internet in addition to sharing this information with other County and State offices, and providing logistical assistance to the committees. CUPF staff is present at all committee meetings to

facilitate compliance with the process. Once a provider is selected, CUPF will issue a space permit and will handle any issues at regarding the use of space.

Who do I contact if I have an issue with the before and after school childcare provider?

The service agreement is between the parents and the provider. Therefore, parents should always contact the provider first and work with them (similar to if the provider was working from a non-school site). If the issue still is not resolved, the parent can then bring the issue up to the principal. If it is a major safety or security issue, or a possible violation of the MSDE license, it must be reported to the proper authorities (i.e., police, protective services, MSDE).

Who is responsible for completing background checks and to make sure the provider is in compliance with County and State regulations?

The MSDE licensing staff has the responsibility to ensure that the selected provider meets State mandated regulations, which includes passing FBI Criminal Justice Information Systems (CJIS) background and fingerprinting checks.

What benefits are available to childcare providers selected?

- **Expanded Scheduling Options:** school-selected before and after school childcare providers are in schools during times unavailable to other users such as snow days when administrative offices are open and schools are closed or professional days.
- **Early Notice of Scheduling:** Before and after school shared space licensed childcare providers are in designated rooms. Other users do not know until August.
- **Direct Access to Client Population:** Because before and after school shared space licensed childcare providers serve the children attending the school they serve, they have direct access to their potential clients and can minimize costs related to business advertising. They also avoid barriers to participation such as transportation to the facility after the school day is over.
- **Dedicated CUPF Staff Support:** CUPF provides staff focused on the placement of before and after school childcare programs. In addition to facilitating the selection process, staff processes the annual school year placements, and are available for conflict resolution related to space and consultation on an on-going basis.
- **Exclusive rights to provide licensed before and after school childcare services:** To support sustainability, only one before and after school childcare vendor is selected, through a bid process, to provide licensed childcare to the students of the school.

What if a child is injured - who is liable?

Montgomery County Government requires all licensed childcare providers to carry insurance coverage with a minimum liability amount of \$300,000 with an aggregate amount of \$300,000. If a child is injured during the custodial time of the licensed childcare provider, and it is due to the provider's negligence, that childcare provider is held liable.

Can children attend licensed before and after school childcare programs in shared space in a school for which they are not enrolled?

No, unless the principal of the school where the provider operates signs off or is ok with the arrangement. The purpose or mission behind the before and after school shared space licensed child care program is to provide parents with quality structured programming after school hours; and a safe and secure place for their children without the need to drive or bus them. The partnership, between the school and the childcare provider, is based on an understanding that only that school's student population may attend that program. This practice ensures that space is available for the students enrolled in the school site.

What happens when a school is closed for renovation?

If the home school is under renovation or modernization, the selected before and after school childcare program will move with the school to the temporary location and have that space licensed by the State. When the renovation or modernization is completed, the childcare will return to the home school. If there is no or insufficient space for the childcare program at the holding school, CUPF will work with the childcare provider to find a temporary location which can accommodate their needs. Continuation of services in a temporary placement site is subject to the competitive selection process.

Come On In