Students of MIT

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology is very pleased to offer a program of subsidized backup child care for MIT undergraduate and graduate students as part of its support for student families. This program is sponsored by the Office of the Dean for Graduate Education and administered by the MIT Work-Life Center.

Who can use this backup program?
Any full-time student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who has dependent children is eligible; eligible students must verify their student status each fiscal year (July 1 - June 30) with the MIT Work-Life Center to have access to backup child care for school-related reasons. Once registered, student families can receive a maximum of 10 days of backup child care each fiscal year, at a subsidized cost of only $5.00 per hour. A day of care is a minimum of 4 hours and a maximum of 8 hours. For families with two students, the same maximum of 10 days will apply; the family will be eligible for a total of 10 days of backup care. Please note: Any unused days of care will not carry forward into the next fiscal year.

When do I need backup services?
Contact Care.com BackupCare whenever your child care responsibilities will interfere with your ability to complete academic work and training, and you need someone to provide care for your children, such as:

- During your child’s school vacations or when daycare is closed
- When your child is a little bit under the weather and you need to work or attend to school responsibilities
• When your MIT responsibilities require you to work late or on weekends
• When you need care for a child with special needs
• When you’re traveling for MIT and your children are accompanying you
• Any time you have a gap in your regular child care arrangements and you need to work to fulfill school responsibilities

Backup care is provided for reasons related to fulfilling school responsibilities, such as attending a class, lecture, study group, or other MIT-related event. It is not meant to be used for a non-school-related evening out with a spouse/partner.

Can I request care when my child is sick?
Yes, you can request care for a mildly ill child; however, Care.com BackupCare must make sure that your child is not contagious (and therefore may spread the illness to the caregiver and children she may care for) or too ill for care. Please review guidance at www.parentsinanpinch.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/HOW-SICK-IS-SICK.pdf.

When are the caregivers available? When can I call?
In-home child care is available during the day or evening, seven days/week. The Care.com BackupCare office hours are: Monday – Thursday, 7:00 am – 8:00 pm EST; Friday from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm EST; and Sunday from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm EST for care needed the following day. Sometimes, a Care.com BackupCare specialist can locate a caregiver for you within an hour or two, but the further in advance you call, the better the chances for a successful match. 24-hour advance notice is usually sufficient.

What is the process for arranging child care?
Step 1: Complete MIT’s Student Status Verification Form (http://hrweb.mit.edu/worklife/piap/student).
You must complete MIT’s Student Status Verification Form online each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30), so that MIT can verify your student eligibility for this service.

To use the backup child care program, you must be currently registered for courses. If you receive an error message while trying to complete MIT’s Student Status Verification Form, please reference our troubleshooting page for help (http://hrweb.mit.edu/worklife/backup-child-care/troubleshooting).

Step 2: Register with Care.com BackupCare at www.care.com/backupcare or call 855-781-1303, ext. 1.

Step 3: Call 855-781-1303, ext. 1, to request backup child care. (The first time you need care in a new fiscal year, you must call to request care. After that first time, you may use the online request portal at www.care.com/backupcare.) Identify yourself as an MIT student. The Placement Specialist will confirm your eligibility and discuss the fees for which you are responsible.

Step 4: You’ll receive two confirmations:
• A Care.com BackupCare specialist will call to tell you about the caregiver and will email you the caregiver profile.
• The caregiver will call to confirm the details of the job.

Step 5: At the end of the backup child care service, you will need to sign the provided timesheet, and your credit card will be charged for your co-pay for the hours of care.
How much do I pay?
MIT students pay a subsidized cost of only $5.00 per hour; your credit card will be charged for the hours of care once the care is complete and the hours are confirmed. There is a four-hour minimum charge per day, and you may use a maximum of 8 hours each day.

Can I use care on a school holiday?
Yes, you can request care for school holidays and other days when your child’s school is not in session. But you must call at least several days in advance for those requests; many people will need care on those same days and if you wait until the last minute, Care.com BackupCare may not be able to fulfill your request. In addition to professional development days for teachers and school vacation weeks which are determined by town or district, the following are “high volume” days when there are many child care requests to be filled:

- Martin Luther King Day (January)
- President’s Day (February)
- Last week in August/first week in September
- Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (September/October)
- Columbus Day (October)
- Veteran’s Day (November)

What if I need child care that's not related to school responsibilities?
You are welcome to use the backup services when your need is not related to your school responsibilities or your needs exceed the 10 placements during the year. In these cases, your credit card will be charged a placement fee of $50.00 per day (or $25.00 for an evening or weekend) in addition to an hourly fee for child care of $18.50.

How do I know I’ll get a quality caregiver?
The Care.com BackupCare screening process is thorough: candidates are screened for child care experience; child care references are checked by phone; Social Security verification and criminal background checks are completed; and each candidate is interviewed face to face. Candidates are also required to complete a health and safety training program, along with an orientation. Care.com BackupCare specialists follow up after every job with an online survey to ensure that the caregivers and their service continue to meet your expectations.

Are backup services available if I bring my children to a conference?
It depends. Care.com BackupCare may be able to supply care if they have caregivers available in the geographic area of your conference in the United States.

For U.S. locations, contact Care.com BackupCare the same way you would call for an in-home care arrangement. More advance notice is required for non-local arrangements. Care.com BackupCare will need to research whether there are appropriate backup child care resources in the community where you will stay. Once Care.com BackupCare identifies a caregiver for your assignment, you will be contacted the same way as described earlier, your credit card information will be taken for your co-pay obligation at the same rate as for in-home care, and you will receive and orient the caregiver to the hotel space in which the care will be provided just as you would to your home. (In some situations, you may pay the caregiver directly and then be reimbursed for costs over your hourly co-pay.) Please remember that this care only can be provided for academic-related activities in another U.S. location.
Can I use backup care if I share a nanny with another family?
Yes, if you have a weekly-scheduled nanny-share arrangement, you can request care for your child (as well as for the other child in your nanny share arrangement) to help you meet school obligations. You will need to provide information on all children (no more than three) for whom care will be provided in this situation.

What if I need to cancel my request for care?
If you cancel once a caregiver has already been reserved for a job, your credit card will be charged $30.00.

How can I make the transition easier for my children?
• Before the caregiver arrives, let your children know that a wonderful playmate is on the way. Suggest that they show the caregiver their favorite toy or book. When the caregiver arrives, introduce her warmly to the children. If you’re nervous, the children will pick up your signals.
• Go over the house rules—TV, snacks, bedtime—with the caregiver and the children together, so that the ground rules are clearly set.
• Review the emergency telephone numbers with the caregiver. Give her the telephone number where you and/or your spouse/partner can be reached, your pediatrician’s name and number, someone to call in case of an emergency and a list of any allergies that the children may have.
• Never sneak out the door! Say goodbye happily and firmly and leave. Coming back or delaying your departure will increase your children’s anxiety.

When I call next time, can I get the same caregiver? Will she clean the house?
Care.com BackupCare strives to give your family as much consistency as possible. A Care.com BackupCare specialist will be happy to contact your last caregiver to see if she’s available. Backup caregivers come prepared to make sure your children are safe and happy, but not to do regular housecleaning.

Visit: hrweb.mit.edu/worklife/backup-child-care-students for complete details, including how to verify your student status.