

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TEMPORARY CHILD CARE BENEFIT

Columbia University has activated a temporary child care benefit for eligible colleagues to receive reimbursement for care during typical spring break periods or because of COVID-related school closings. Here are the answers to some Frequently Asked Questions that we have received. We hope this contains the answers to *your* questions.

Q1: *What exactly is the program?*

Answer: This Bright Horizons program allows eligible faculty and staff to be reimbursed for out-of-pocket costs incurred when you experience a breakdown in your regular child care and need to secure in-home care from within your own personal network, *additional* care at a school or child care center, or a camp program within a specific timeframe due to spring break or COVID-related school closings.

Q2: *What does that actually mean?*

Answer: Through this temporary program, you can register to be reimbursed for up to 10 days of care for your child(ren) up to age 13 by your own caregiver, a spring break camp, or if you add days at their child care center **beyond** their regular days in attendance. You can request \$100 per day for those days of care.

Q3: *Who is eligible for the program?*

Answer:

- Officer of Instruction
- Officer of Research
- Officer of the Library
- Officer of Administration
- Non-Union Support Staff
- Union 2110 Staff
- Post-Docs - including Post-Doc Research Fellows, Research Scholars, and Research Scientists, regardless of eligibility for other University benefits
- Doctoral student, enrolled either full-time or part-time
- Teaching Fellow not in a Ph.D. program

Q3. *What is the time period for this benefit?*

Answer: This is a temporary benefit that can be reimbursed **ONLY** for care used between March 15th – April 16th, 2021. It is not retroactive to care before March 15th or for future care after April 16th.

Q4. *How many days of care will be reimbursed?*

Answer: You can be reimbursed for no more than **10** days of care.

- Q5. *Can I reimburse my spouse/partner who stayed home with my child or reimburse myself if I stay home?*
No, you must be making an actual cash payment for care provided by someone outside your household—a family member, a friend, a neighbor, or a familiar babysitter (or a child care center, camp, after-school program, etc.). Reimbursement is **not** available for care provided by you or a member of your own household, including a spouse/partner.
- Q6. *There's a great spring break camp I'd like to send my child to for a week. Can I be reimbursed for that program?*
Answer: Yes, if your child attends a spring break camp or other limited time program during this period, you can be reimbursed for \$100 per day.
- Q7. *If I hire someone to bring my child to and from a special spring break program or to provide after-camp or after-school care, can I be reimbursed for that, too?*
Answer: You can be reimbursed a total of \$100 per day for whatever combination of care that is needed.
- Q8. *Both my spouse/partner and I work for Columbia. Can we both claim the reimbursement?*
The benefit is per household; there is no doubling where two Columbia employees share responsibility for the care of one or more dependents in a single household.
- Q9. *I have more than one child. Can I be reimbursed for care for each of them?*
This is a single benefit, regardless of the number of dependents in the household. You can only receive one reimbursement.
- Q10. *I am temporarily living outside the NY area. Can I still use this benefit?*
Answer: Yes, it doesn't matter where you are living. You can use the benefit for temporary care anywhere. It is not tied to a specific location.
- Q11. *I usually use the regular in-home care available through Bright Horizons for back-up. Can I continue to use the Bright Horizons care during this period? Can I get reimbursed for that?*
Answer: The regular in-network back-up care provided by Bright Horizons where they send a caregiver to your home or you take your child to a back-up care center or other center is still available during this period. You can feel free to use that care if you are eligible and you prefer. However, since that care is already subsidized, the regular co-pays are still in place and are not eligible for reimbursement.
- Q12. *I am trying to register for Bright Horizons for the first time but it says that there is an issue with my log-in. What is the log-in information for the initial use?*
Answer: Username: columbia; Password: Benefits4You (case sensitive). You will then be prompted to create an individual account. More information can be found here: (<https://worklife.columbia.edu/backupcare>).

Q.13. *I am currently on leave. Can I still use the reimbursement program?*

Answer: No, unfortunately the program is only available for those who are working full time or in an eligible academic program. It cannot be used by those who are on leave.

Q.14. *My regular schedule requires me to work on the weekend and/or I have been asked to fill-in on the weekend. Can I use the reimbursement care on the weekend?*

Answer: Yes, if you are required to attend to Columbia work on the weekends during the March 15- April 16 timeframe, you can apply for Crisis Care reimbursement, with the applicable limit of 10 days, for this purpose.

Q.15. *Is the reimbursement only available to me if I come to campus for work? Can I use it when I am working remotely to cover additional costs?*

Answer: Your work location doesn't matter for this program. You can be working on campus, in your office, or remotely. As long as you have additional child care expenses due to spring break or COVID-related school closings, you can use the program.

Q.16. *How do I register for the reimbursement program?*

- If you do not already have a Bright Horizons account, you must first create one.
- Visit the [Back-Up Care Website](#).
- For **first-time log-in**, click the link at the bottom of the page below the yellow login button that says "**Not signed up yet? Register Now**"
- You will be taken to a page where you can input our Columbia information: **Username: columbia; Password: Benefits4You (case sensitive)** for access; **OR**
- **Call 877-BH-CARES (242-2737)**

Q.17. *How will I receive my reimbursement?*

Answer: You can choose to accept the funds transfer to your bank account through Zelle, or you can choose to decline the Zelle payment and receive a check that will be sent to the home address listed in your back-up care profile. The payment will be made after the days you requested have passed.

Q.18. *What is the age limit for program eligibility?*

Answer: The program is available for children up to age 13.

Q.19. *My child has special needs and is over the age of 13. Can I request reimbursement for their spring break caregiver or program or when their school is closed for COVID reasons during this period?*

Answer: Yes, if your child has special needs and is over age 13, please email worklife@columbia.edu and let us know. We can approve you using the program.

- Q20. *Does this reimbursement count towards my allocation of back-up care hours for this year?*
Answer: Yes, use of Crisis Care reimbursement counts toward your 200 hours of back-up care for the year and must be taken in a minimum of 4-hour increments.
- Q21. *Can I use the reimbursement to pay my regular care costs?*
Answer: This program is only for expenses that are due to increased care needed as a result of COVID-related school or child care center closings, unanticipated hybrid/remote schooling or spring break school vacation days.
- Q22. *When is the last day I can use the program?*
Answer: Your reimbursement request must be submitted no later than the last day of the program, April 16, 2021. No reimbursements can be processed after this date.
- Q23. *I had tried to submit my request for care I used last week but I am not able to do so because the option to choose that date wasn't listed. What should I do?*
Answer: You can now make a reimbursement request for any 10 days during the activation period (March 15th – April 16th) that you used temporary care due to COVID-related school closings or typical spring break periods. All the applicable dates are now listed. You do not need to pre-register or reserve the days, but you certainly can.
- Q24. *Do I need to have receipts for the care I've used?*
Answer: You do not need to submit receipts to Bright Horizons, but please save them, noting the date(s) and time used, and have the caregiver whom you paid sign the document. Columbia does not require any personally-identifying information for the caregiver, other than their name and signature. Participation in the reimbursement program is subject to audit at any time to confirm guidelines were followed.
- Q25. *I'm registered for Bright Horizons and want to request the reimbursement. How do I find the right page and the right way to make the request?*
Answer: Here is what the page looks like – it should be available when you log in to your Bright Horizons account. You should see a gold button that says "Request Reimbursement." When you click the button, it will take you to a page titled "Request Crisis Care Reimbursement" where you can enter further details. See the next page for screen shots.

Home x +

https://backup.brighthouse.com/Home/Index

Apps Getting Started NEW in Work and F... Child Care & S... Imported From Fire...

Bright Horizons. Back-Up Care

Welcome, [Name] | Benefit - (Columbia University) Logout | Other Services

Home Reservations Providers Benefit Care Profile Resources Notifications 1 My Account | Help

MESSAGE CENTER

Keep everyone safe - see our COVID-19 policy [HERE](#)

Keep everyone healthy - remember to conduct your health check before each care session - [HERE](#)

RESERVATIONS (3 OF 7) [Request Reimbursement](#) [Request Care](#)

COMPLETED [VIEW RESERVATION | FEEDBACK](#)

Reservation: [Name]

CRISIS CARE CARE RECIPIENTS

Crisis Care [Name]

COMPLETED [VIEW RESERVATION | FEEDBACK](#)

Reservation: [Name]

CRISIS CARE CARE RECIPIENTS

EMPLOYEE PROFILE [VIEW BENEFITS](#)

[Name]

Bright Horizons Back-Up Care™ 200.00 Hours*

Remaining Utilization*

CARE RECIPIENTS (2) [ADD](#)

[Name]

[Name]

AUTHORIZED CONTACTS (1) [ADD](#)

[Name]

MY LOCATIONS (2) [ADD](#)

FIND CARE NEAR YOU

Select a location OR specify a Zip Code

12:27 PM 3/17/2021

Back-Up Care (Office of Work...) Back-Up Care Advantage

https://backup.brighthouse.com/CrisisCare?reservationId=08&sessionKey=c82d1043-278b-418c-af5c-94...

Apps Getting Started NEW in Work and F... Child Care & S... Imported From Fire...

Bright Horizons. Back-Up Care

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REQUEST CRISIS CARE REIMBURSEMENT

For a limited time, your employer has authorized Bright Horizons to offer Crisis Care.

We are activating Crisis Care due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. Crisis Care is activated from 3/15/2021 - 4/16/2021.

Bright Horizons will reimburse you \$100 for each day of care you arrange on your own. You are responsible for all other costs of the care you arrange. Care dates reimbursed through Crisis Care will be counted as back-up care utilization and subtracted from your yearly allotment.

Please note: Your reimbursement will not be processed until after the last date requested. You may break your request into shorter periods if you need reimbursement sooner. After the last date of care, look for an email from Chase Payments with instructions on how to receive your reimbursement. Please ensure your primary email address and your home address on your profile are correct. Also, please allow two weeks from the last date of care for payment to arrive.

CARE RECIPIENT(S) **DATE(S)** **CARE DURATION**

☐ 4 Hrs 0 Mins

[ADD ANOTHER REW](#)

I confirm that my regular care arrangements are not available, I need to work, and my preference is to secure care through my own network. I plan to use the caregiver or child care center identified and selected solely by me for back-up care for the care recipient(s) identified above on the date(s) indicated and request that Bright Horizons reimburse me at the following rate:

Reimbursement Total \$: 0

[Continue Child Care Form](#)