

Child-Only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services

Economic Services Administration · Community Services Division

Program Description

In some situations, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash assistance is provided solely for children in a household (child-only TANF). This happens when children are living with non-parental caregivers or with parents who are not eligible for TANF. Child-only TANF households are not required to engage in participation requirements as a condition of assistance. Receipt of child-only TANF does not count against the 60-month federal time limit on assistance.

Non-parental child-only TANF

In these households, adults are caring for a minor child who is not their own, and they do not have a financial responsibility to provide for that child. These households include:

- **Kinship families** who are providing care for a minor relative¹ and do not request or are not income-eligible to receive a TANF grant for themselves.
 - The grant is for the child(ren) only and, since the caregiver is not financially responsible for the child, we do not count the caregiver's income.
 - These households make up about 52% of all child-only TANF cases.
- **Legal guardian(s) and In Loco Parentis caregivers** who are not related to the child in their care and do not request or are not income-eligible for a TANF grant for themselves.
 - The grant is for the child(ren) only and, since the caregiver is not financially responsible for the child, we do not count the caregiver's income.
 - The department completes a background check for non-relative caregivers over the age of 18 in the household who do not have legal guardianship. Results of the background check do not affect program eligibility; however, optional supports are offered to the family as needed.
 - These households make up about 11% of all child-only TANF cases.

Parental child-only TANF

In these households, the child lives in the home with their legal parent(s), but the parent(s) are not eligible for a TANF grant for themselves. These households include:

- **Disabled Parents** who are not eligible for TANF, as they are receiving federal Supplemental Security Income but receive a child-only TANF grant for their qualified children.
 - Since the parent(s) are not counted as part of the assistance unit, their income is not budgeted against the TANF grant.
 - These households make up about 23% of all child-only TANF cases.

(Continued on next page.)

¹See [WAC 388-454-0010](#) for the applicable definition of relative.

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Transforming lives

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- **Undocumented immigrant parents**, who are not eligible for a TANF grant for themselves due to their citizenship status but receive a child-only TANF grant for their qualified children.
 - Since the parent(s) are financially responsible for providing for their child, a portion of their income is counted against the TANF grant.
 - These households make up about 14% of all child-only TANF cases.
- **Disqualified parents** who are not eligible for TANF due to legal status but receive a child-only TANF grant for their qualified children.
 - Since the parent(s) are financially responsible for providing for their child, a portion of their income is counted against the TANF grant.
 - These households make up less than 1% of all child-only TANF cases.

Child-Only TANF Cases – June 2023 Snapshot

TANF/SFA Child-Only Caseload by Major Caretaker Groups, June 2023 Snapshot

