Understanding your Harvard University child care benefit

Sick kids. School closings. Summer vacation. Balancing work and family priorities can be challenging. Fortunately, you have a benefit that enables you to find the last-minute in-home care you need through Care.com® BackupCare℠ provided by Parents in a Pinch. So you can rest easy knowing that your family is in good hands.

When do I need backup services?
• During school vacations or when daycare is closed
• When your child is a little bit under the weather and you need to work
• When you have to work late or on weekends
• When you need care for a child with special needs
• When your nanny goes on vacation or leaves unexpectedly
• When your family needs some additional support for work/life balance
• Any time you have a gap in your regular child care arrangements and you need to work

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, and Friday from 7:00 am – 5:00 pm EST. As an employee of Harvard University, you also have access to a Care.com BackupCare specialist on Sunday from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm EST for care needed the following day. Care.com BackupCare also
provides an extended backup program solely for Harvard University employees—you can call as early as 6:00 am EST throughout the work week. At 6:00 am, you can be guaranteed a caregiver arriving at your home within an hour, if requested; if you call after 7:00 am, you will receive the same preferential placement attention you have always enjoyed. In general, 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?**

Call Care.com BackupCare directly at 855-781-1303 to request care. You may also register and request care at [www.care.com/backupcare](http://www.care.com/backupcare).

- When you call, identify yourself as an employee of Harvard University. Please register with the Office of Work/Life before requesting child care services.

- Care.com BackupCare will identify a caregiver for you who meets your specific needs.

**You'll receive two confirmations:**

1. A Care.com BackupCare specialist will call to tell you about the caregiver and will email you the caregiver profile.
2. The caregiver will call to confirm the details of the job.

- At the end of the day, sign the timesheet and pay the caregiver directly.

**How much do I pay?**

Employees pay an hourly fee directly to the caregiver. In Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island, the fee is $15.00/hour. There is a four-hour minimum charge per day. As an employee of Harvard University, you may use up to a combined total of 20 calendar days of child care and dependent care per contract year (July 1 through June 30).

**What if I need child care that's not related to work?**

You are welcome to use the backup services when your need is not work-related or your needs exceed the 20 placements during the year. In these cases, you pay the same rate to the caregiver, and in addition, your credit card will be charged a placement fee of $50.00 per day.

**Can I use Care.com BackupCare if I’m traveling with my children?**

Yes, you can use Care.com BackupCare if you’re traveling with your children on behalf of Harvard. However, you will have coverage only in those locations where Care.com BackupCare already provides service.

**Can I share a Care.com BackupCare caregiver with another Harvard family?**

Yes, “pooled childcare” is an available option for you. Child care is provided in a Harvard employee’s home for up to six children of no more than three different pre-registered Harvard families. One or more caregivers will provide care, depending on the number and ages of children, and the rate for the
Caregiver(s) will range from $15.00/hour to $20.00/hour. When there is one caregiver, one day of care is charged to the Harvard employee in whose home the day of pooled child care is being provided; if more caregivers are required, a day will be charged to the other Harvard families for each additional caregiver.

**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.

**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 them 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 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.

**Can I request reimbursement for Care.com BackupCare fees through my flexible spending account?**

Yes, any fees paid to Care.com BackupCare caregivers are eligible for reimbursement through your flexible spending plan. You may use the receipt provided by the caregiver as your documentation, or you may request a receipt from Care.com BackupCare.
Can Care.com BackupCare help me find a nanny? Could my backup caregiver become my nanny?
Yes! Care.com BackupCare specialist can work with you to find a nanny, or they can help your temporary caregiver become your full- or part-time nanny. (Outside of Massachusetts, a Care.com BackupCare specialist will put you in touch with their partner agency.) All you have to do is call the Nanny Placement Specialists at 855-781-1303. They’ll discuss the process and fees. Harvard University employees receive a discount on nanny placement fees (in Massachusetts). If you find a caregiver on your own, the NannyCheck service can help you with screening and training, for a discounted fee.