A dependent care flexible spending account (FSA) is an employer-sponsored benefit that allows you to pay for eligible dependent care expenses on a pre-tax basis.

FSA Benefits

A dependent care FSA saves you money. The contributions you make to an FSA are deducted from your pay before your federal, FICA and state taxes are calculated and are never reported to the IRS. The end result is that you decrease your taxable income.

How to Use Your FSA

You authorize your employer to deduct a pre-tax amount for your FSA from each paycheck, up to the IRS limits stated below. You pay for the qualified expenses out of pocket, and then file a claim for reimbursement.

Your FSA Option

Dependent/Elder Care Account (DCA)

The DCA allows you to pay for day care expenses for a dependent child, adult or elder. Eligible services include: nursery school, nanny and or before/after school care through age 12, day care for a disabled adult child, elder day care for parent or dependent, or day camp for children through age 12.

FSA Contribution Limits

For 2021, you may contribute up to \$5,000 per year if you are married and filing a joint return, or if you are a single parent. If you are married and filing separately, you may contribute up to \$2,500 per year, per parent.

What is Covered

Dependent care FSA funds cover care costs for your eligible dependents so you can work in the following situations:

- Before-school or after-school care (other than tuition)
- Custodial care for dependent adults
- Licensed day care centers
- Nursery schools or pre-schools
- Placement fees for a provider, such as an au pair
- Day camp, nursery school or a private sitter
- Late pick-up fees
- Summer or holiday day camps



What is Not Covered

These items are never eligible for tax-free purchase with dependent care DCA funds:

- Expenses for a non-qualified child 13 years and older
- Care provided by a relative living in your household
- Educational expenses including kindergarten or private school tuition fees
- Amounts paid for food, clothing, sports lessons, field trips and entertainment
- Care for a dependent while you are home from work due to an illness

AccountLink

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