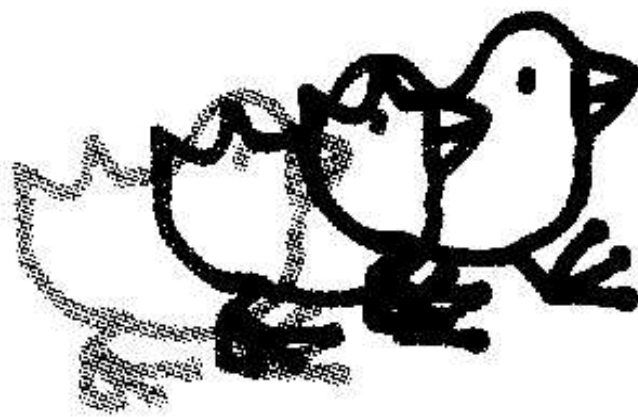


Welcome to the

Ontario Child Care Supplement  
for Working Families



# The Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families

This document is not intended as a substitute for the *Income Tax Act* (Ontario) (Section 8.5) and Regulations.

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**This guide contains information relating to the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) – an Ontario program administered by the Ministry of Revenue. The guide also refers to the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) – a program developed by Ontario and administered on its behalf by the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) – a federal program administered by the CRA.**

## The Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families

The Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) is a tax-free monthly payment to help with the costs of raising children under the age of seven, born prior to July 1, 2009. The program benefits low-to-middle income single or two-parent families, families with one stay-at-home parent, or families with one or both parents studying or in training. A family does not have to have a child in daycare to apply for the OCCS.

The program started in 1998 and is administered by the Ministry of Revenue's Client Accounts and Services Branch. The OCCS is tax-free. It does not affect the federal CCTB payments.

## Eligibility

To receive the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS), you have to:

- be a resident of Ontario
- receive the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB)
- have children under age seven, born prior to July 1, 2009, and
- have the appropriate income level (minimum annual family earned income greater than \$5,000), or qualifying child care expenses. There is a gradual decline in the OCCS amounts as income increases for families with net incomes over \$20,000.

The OCCS is paid to the same person who receives the federal CCTB. This is the person primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of the child. Although this person is usually the mother, it could be the father, a grandparent or guardian.

**In the 2007 Budget, the Ontario government created the new Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) to help low-income Ontario families provide for their children.**

## The Ontario Child Benefit

With the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) payments in July 2008, your Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) payments are now being reduced by the amount of the OCB you receive for each child under age seven, born prior to July 1, 2009.

Families whose OCCS monthly entitlement exceeds their monthly OCB payment will continue to receive a supplementary OCCS payment. This will continue until your dependent child turns seven, or you are no longer entitled to receive the OCCS. The OCB continues until the child reaches 18 years of age. Children born on, or after July 1, 2009, will not be eligible for the OCCS payments.

For further information on the OCB you can visit the web-site: [ontario.ca/childbenefit](http://ontario.ca/childbenefit).

## The Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families application

The Ontario Ministry of Revenue sends the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) applications to eligible families. The application is personalized, which means that it contains your name and address, your reference number and the birth date of your child or children under the age of seven, born prior to July 1, 2009. No other individual can use your application.

The OCCS is not paid automatically. You must complete an OCCS application each year to verify your personal information on the application and to tell us if your child care costs are subsidized. This information is used in the calculation of your payments. The OCCS will be adjusted if your child care costs are subsidized by a government agency.

## About subsidies

Your child care costs are subsidized if your child is in daycare and the town or city where you live helps you pay for some or all of your child care costs. If you are not sure whether your child care costs are

subsidized, ask your child care provider. Do not complete the Subsidized Child Care section of the application if your child care costs are not subsidized.

If your child care costs are subsidized, write in the amount of actual child care costs that you pay over and above the subsidy for each child under age seven, born prior to July 1, 2009, for the month shown. This amount is considered to be your average monthly child care cost and will be used to determine your entitlement for the 12-month period. This amount includes all out-of-pocket expenses for which you have receipts that you can claim as a child care expense deduction on your income tax return. (Do not enter the costs covered by government subsidies.)

If your child is in subsidized daycare and your child care costs change weekly or monthly, due to shift work or other factors, attach a note to your application explaining your situation. Your Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families will be calculated on a monthly basis with the information you provide.

## When to apply

The benefit year is July to the following June. If you are currently receiving the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS), you may be sent an application before the start of the new benefit year. If you recently started receiving the CCTB, or if there is new information that now qualifies you for the OCCS, you will receive your application during the benefit year. The ministry receives new information regularly and mails applications weekly.

**You must complete and return your application promptly to the Ministry of Revenue. There is an 18 month deadline for returning your application from the date we originally sent your application.** You will lose one month's payment for each month you delay returning your application after the deadline. Complete and return the application even if you think you do not qualify. Your circumstances may change and if your application is on file, your entitlement will be automatically recalculated.

## How the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families is calculated

The Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) is calculated for the 12-month period beginning in July and ending in June of the following year. The ministry uses the information from both your and your spouse's or common-law partner's previous year's income tax returns, CCTB information and child care costs reported on your OCCS application.

Your OCCS is based on:

- the number of children in your family under age seven born prior to July 1, 2009
- your family earned income, which includes income from employment, self-employment, training allowances, the taxable portion of scholarships or research grants, and disability payments received under the Canada or Quebec Pension Plans, from your previous year's income tax return(s)
- family net income, which is usually the amount from line 236 from both your and your spouse's or common-law partner's (if applicable) previous year's income tax return(s) minus any "Universal Child Care Benefit" amount from line 117 from the income tax returns filed for the base year
- qualifying child care expenses, which are usually the amount from line 214 (Child Care Expenses) on your previous year's income tax return(s). This amount is determined when you

complete Form T778, Child Care Expenses Deduction, available from the Canada Revenue Agency, and

- whether your child is in daycare and the town or city where you live helps you pay for your child care costs.

## **When payments are issued**

Monthly payments are generally issued on the last working day of the month (the December payment is earlier in the month). Your payment will be issued in the middle of the following month if your application is processed after regular payments are issued. Retroactive payments to the month you are first entitled will be included.

You will receive a one-time payment for the full amount if your entitlement for the full year is less than \$120. You will receive a one-time annual payment of \$10 if your entitlement for the full year is greater than \$0 but less than \$10.

It is recommended that you have your Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families deposited directly into your bank account. Direct deposit is a safe, convenient, dependable, and time-saving way to receive payments. The bank account can be in your name, your spouse's or common-law partner's name or your child's name. To start or change your direct deposit, send us a blank cheque with "VOID" written on the front, or complete a Direct Deposit Request form available by calling the Ministry of Revenue at 1 866 668-8297.

A cheque will be issued and mailed if you cannot use direct deposit.

## **Changes should be reported to the Ministry of Revenue**

Any of the following may affect your eligibility for the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) and you must inform the Ministry of Revenue immediately to ensure that you continue to receive the correct entitlement:

- you change your address or move out of the province
- you change your direct deposit information
- your child care subsidy starts, stops, increases or decreases
- you cease to be the primary caregiver of the child
- a marital status change
- the birth or death of a child.

For confidentiality reasons, Ministry of Revenue staff will only discuss account information with the person who receives the OCCS. If you want someone to collect or release information on your behalf, write to us or complete the Authorization to Disclose Information form.

## **When to contact the Canada Revenue Agency, Canada Child Tax Benefit program**

There are some changes that the Ministry of Revenue can accept only when the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) updates your Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) information.

Changes to your marital status or your family situation - for example, the birth of a child - must be reported to the CRA (CCTB program). The address and telephone number for the CCTB are listed in the "Government Blue Pages" section of your local telephone directory under "Child and Family Benefits Services" or through the internet at [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/cctb/menu-eng.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/cctb/menu-eng.html). When the CRA (CCTB program) notifies the Ministry of Revenue of a change, your OCCS will be recalculated and a new Entitlement Notice will be sent to you.

## **When your Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families is recalculated**

Every July, the first month of the new benefit year, your Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) is calculated based on the information from your OCCS application, and from the income tax return(s) you and your spouse or common-law partner filed for the previous year.

Your OCCS may be recalculated any time during the year as a result of changes to your child care costs, your marital status or family situation. In addition, if the Canada Revenue Agency reassesses the income tax returns that you or your spouse or common-law partner filed for the previous year, and your family income information changes, your OCCS is recalculated. The OCCS for a particular child will stop the month after the child turns seven. This will affect your monthly payments as the OCCS will be calculated based on the number of children in your family who are under the age of seven, born prior to July 1, 2009. (See "How the OCCS is calculated").

A new Entitlement Notice is sent to you showing the revised calculation each time your entitlement changes.

## **Questions and Answers**

The following features the most commonly asked questions the ministry receives regarding the Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) program. The complete Questions and Answers follow the Index.

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- Q.2 How do I apply for the OCCS?**
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- Q.6 How will my OCCS payment change with the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit monthly payments in July 2008?**
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- Q.19 I'm in school or taking job training. Am I eligible for the OCCS?**
- Q.20 I receive Social Assistance. Am I eligible for the OCCS?**
- Q.21 My child care expenses have just increased/decreased. Will my OCCS change?**
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- Q.23 I am on the waiting list for subsidized child care and a government agency pays for a babysitter. Does this mean I am subsidized?**
- Q.24 I recently had another child. Will my OCCS increase?**
- Q.25 What happens to the OCCS payments if the recipient dies?**
- Q.26 What happens if I am overpaid the OCCS?**
- Q.27 Are there any instances when the Ministry will not recalculate entitlement?**
- Q.28 Why can't my spouse or common-law partner obtain information about my OCCS payments?**
- Q.29 If I do not agree with an amount on the Entitlement Notice, what should I do?**
- Q.1 How do I qualify for the OCCS?**

You will receive a pre-printed, personalized OCCS application from the Ontario Ministry of Revenue if you:

- are a resident of Ontario
- have children under age seven, born prior to July 1, 2009
- receive the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit, and
- have the appropriate income level (minimum annual family earned income greater than \$5,000), or qualifying child care expenses.

**Q.2 How do I apply for the OCCS?**

The OCCS is not paid automatically - you must complete an application each year. A personalized application for the OCCS is sent from the Ministry of Revenue to eligible families. If you are currently receiving the OCCS, you may be sent an application before the start of the new benefit year.

If you have a child born prior to July 1, 2009 and you have applied for and received the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) , you will receive your OCCS application after the ministry is notified by the CCTB.

The application requires only that you write in whether your child care costs are subsidized, and if so, how much you pay for child care over and above the subsidy, for each child under age seven, born prior to July 1, 2009, for the month shown on the application. If you are not sure, ask your child care provider.

**Note:** Your child care is **subsidized** if your child is in daycare and the town or city where you live helps you pay for some or all of those fees.

Do **not** complete the Subsidized Child Care section of the application if your child care costs are not subsidized.

**Remember: your child does not have to be in daycare for you to apply.**

### **Q.3 When are the OCCS payments made?**

Benefits are paid over a 12-month period from July of one year to June of the next year and are generally issued on the last working day of the month (except for December when they are issued earlier in the month). Your payment will be issued in the middle of the following month if your application is processed after regular payments are issued. Retroactive payments to the month you are first entitled will be included.

A one-time payment for the full amount is issued if your entitlement for the full year is less than \$120. A one-time annual payment of \$10 is issued if your entitlement for the full year is greater than \$0 but less than \$10.

### **Q.4 Who receives the payment?**

The OCCS will be paid to the same person who receives the federal Canada Child Tax Benefit. This is the person primarily responsible for the care and upbringing of the children. Although this person is usually the mother, it could be the father, a grandparent or guardian.

### **Q.5 I did not receive my OCCS payment this month. What should I do?**

If you receive your OCCS payment by direct deposit and you have confirmed with your financial institution that the payment was not deposited into your bank account, call the Ministry of Revenue at 1 866 668-8297.

If you do not receive your payment by mail on the last business day of the month, please wait five working days before calling the Ministry of Revenue, to allow time for mail delivery.

### **Q.6 How will my OCCS payment change with the introduction of the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB) monthly payments in July 2008?**

With the introduction of monthly OCB payments to eligible families in July 2008, your OCCS payments are now being reduced by the amount of the OCB you receive for each child under age seven, born prior to July 1, 2009.

Families whose OCCS monthly entitlement exceeds their monthly OCB payment will continue to receive a supplementary OCCS payment. This will continue until your dependent child turns seven, or you are no longer entitled to receive the OCCS. The OCB continues until the child reaches 18 years of age. Children born on, or after July 1, 2009, will not be eligible for the OCCS payments.

For further information on OCB you can visit the web-site: [ontario.ca/childbenefit](http://ontario.ca/childbenefit).



**Q.7 How do I get an OCCS application if I didn't receive one?**

If you receive the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) and did not get an OCCS application, call the Ministry of Revenue at 1 866 668-8297 and provide your personal information (e.g., full name, address, reference number). You will be sent a replacement application or you will be advised if you do not qualify.

If you do not receive the CCTB, contact the CRA to obtain a CCTB application. If you qualify for the federal benefit, and you meet the OCCS eligibility requirements, you will automatically be sent a personalized OCCS application to complete and return to the Ministry of Revenue.

**Q.8 Do I have to send receipts for my child care costs with my application?**

No, you do not have to attach receipts to your application, but keep them in case you are asked for them. Generally, you should keep your receipts for six years.

**Q.9 The application asks me to provide information for direct deposit, but I do not have a bank account. Does this mean I will not be able to get the OCCS?**

A cheque will be issued by mail if you do not have a bank account, or if there is another reason why you cannot use direct deposit.

It is recommended that you open an account and have your payments deposited directly into your bank account. This will ensure that you receive your OCCS each month on a timely basis. It will also prevent your cheque from getting lost or stolen, or being delayed due to a postal disruption. You can have your OCCS deposited directly into a bank account in your name, your spouse's or common-law partner's name or your child's name.

**Q.10 Is the OCCS taxable?**

No. The OCCS is a tax-free monthly payment. In addition, the OCCS will not affect your Canada Child Tax Benefit payments or the amount of the child care subsidy that you may be receiving from the town or city where you live.

**Q.11 Why is there an income limit for the program?**

The OCCS program is intended to assist working families earning low to middle incomes. There is a gradual decline in the OCCS amounts as income increases for families with net incomes over \$20,000 (a reduction rate of eight per cent), thereby focusing maximum benefits on low-income working families, and providing reduced benefits to many middle-income families.

**Q.12 Why do families need earned income greater than \$5,000 to qualify for the OCCS?**

The OCCS is intended to help working families earning modest incomes. Earnings over \$5,000 are roughly equivalent to two days' pay per week at the minimum wage for a full year. This level is considered to be the minimum acceptable level for families earning a modest income.

**Q.13 Why is a self-employed person whose net earnings were reduced below \$5,000 by *claiming business expenses from self-employment* not eligible for the OCCS?**

In order to evaluate a family's entitlement for the OCCS, the ministry relies on the income tax information as reported on the previous year's income tax return. Income tax rules allow self-employed

individuals to reduce their net earnings by claiming business expenses and federal deductions and exemptions. Reducing their net earnings to below \$5,000 makes them ineligible for the OCCS, unless they have qualifying child care expenses in the previous year. This is the same approach taken with employed individuals.

**Q.14 Will the OCCS reduce the amount I can claim as a qualifying child care expense deduction for income tax purposes?**

No, the OCCS will not reduce your qualifying child care expense deduction for tax purposes.

**Q.15 What is meant by family earned income, family net income, qualifying child care expenses and child care subsidy?**

**Family earned income** includes income from employment, self-employment, training allowances, the taxable portion of scholarships, net research grants, and disability payments received under the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans from both your and your spouse's or common-law partner's previous year's income tax return(s).

**Family net income** is usually the amount from line 236 (Net Income) from both your and your spouse's or common-law partner's income tax return(s) minus any "Universal Child Care Benefit" amount from line 117 from the income tax returns you and your spouse or common-law partner (if applicable) filed for the base year.

**Qualifying child care expenses** are usually the amount from line 214 (Child Care Expenses) from both your and your spouse's or common-law partner's previous year's income tax return(s). This amount is determined by completing Form T778, Child Care Expenses Deduction, available from the CRA.

**Child care subsidy** means your child is in daycare and the town or city where you live helps you pay for your child care costs.

**Q.16 Why do single-parent families receive more than two-parent families?**

Single parents receive more because they face greater financial challenges than most two-parent families.

**Q.17 Why are working families in which one parent stays at home to care for their young children eligible for the OCCS?**

All families pay child care costs either directly or indirectly. For example, families with one parent in the work force and one parent at home caring for young children have indirect costs in the form of lost earnings by keeping one parent at home.

As long as their total work earnings, as reported on their prior year's income tax returns, exceed \$5,000, low and middle income families with either one or two earners are eligible for the OCCS. It is not necessary to have child care expenses in order to qualify for the OCCS if the applicant meets the income requirements.

**Q.18 My spouse or common-law partner stays at home. Do we qualify for the OCCS?**

Working families with one stay-at-home parent are eligible for the OCCS. Your child does not have to be attending daycare to be eligible.

**Q.19 I'm in school or taking job training. Am I eligible for the OCCS?**

If you paid qualifying child care expenses to attend school or obtain job training, you may be eligible for the OCCS. Qualifying child care expenses are those claimed, and allowed as a deduction for tax purposes, on line 214 (Child Care Expenses) of your previous year's income tax return(s). To determine what is included as a child care expense, refer to the federal Form T778, Child Care Expenses Deduction.

**Q.20 I receive Social Assistance. Am I eligible for the OCCS?**

You may be eligible for the OCCS provided you have earnings from work or qualifying child care expenses. (See "How the OCCS is calculated").

**Q.21 My child care expenses have just increased/decreased. Will my OCCS change?**

If your child is not in subsidized daycare, changes in child care expenses will not affect your OCCS for the current benefit year (July to June), but will be taken into consideration next year when calculating your entitlement. This is because the OCCS is based on your family income and qualifying child care expenses for the previous year.

However, if your child is in subsidized daycare, you must report any changes in your monthly child care costs to the Ministry of Revenue. Your OCCS may need to be recalculated. If so, you will be sent a new Entitlement Notice showing the new calculation.

**Q.22 What happens if I work shifts and my child care expenses change from month to month?**

If your child is in subsidized daycare and your child care costs change weekly or monthly due to shift work or other factors, attach a note to your application explaining your situation. We will calculate your entitlement on a monthly basis using the figures that you provide.

**Q.23 I am on the waiting list for subsidized child care and a government agency pays for a babysitter. Does this mean I am subsidized?**

As long as a government agency pays for the cost of child care, you are considered subsidized and you should complete your OCCS application as "yes" to subsidized child care costs. Write in your out-of-pocket expenses and exclude the amount you are given by the government agency for the babysitter.

**Q.24 I recently had another child. Will my OCCS increase?**

Families who have a new child must complete a Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) application, available from the Canada Revenue Agency. Once the child's eligibility is established, the CCTB will notify the Ministry of Revenue. Your OCCS will be recalculated and a new Entitlement Notice will be sent to you.

**Q.25 What happens to the OCCS payments if the recipient dies?**

The OCCS and the Canada Child Tax Benefit (CCTB) program should be notified if an individual who was receiving the OCCS payments for a child dies. The CCTB will inform the ministry of the child's new caregiver. The Ministry of Revenue will determine if the new caregiver is eligible for the OCCS and, if so, will send an OCCS application to that individual.

If payments are issued after the recipient's death because the ministry is not aware of the death, please return the payments to the ministry with a brief letter of explanation.

**Q.26 What happens if I am overpaid the OCCS?**

An overpayment can occur if the ministry is notified of a change that affects your eligibility. For example, an income tax reassessment by the Canada Revenue Agency will affect your eligibility. (See "Changes should be reported to the Ministry of Revenue").

When your OCCS is recalculated, you will receive a new Entitlement Notice which will tell you the amount of your overpayment. If you still have entitlement, the ministry will automatically hold back 50 per cent of your monthly payment until the overpayment is repaid. If you no longer have entitlement, you must repay the overpayment by sending a cheque payable to the "Minister of Finance - Child Care Supplement", or contact the ministry to make other repayment arrangements.

**Q.27 Are there any instances when the ministry will not recalculate entitlement?**

No, the ministry will always recalculate entitlement whenever a change is received and will adjust payments accordingly. However, there is a special instance when the ministry will recalculate entitlement but will not adjust payments for the balance of the benefit year.

This happens when a marital status change takes place during the benefit year. The addition or subtraction of a spouse's or common-law partner's income may result in a reduction or loss of a family's entitlement. Therefore a new calculation is done using the new information, a comparison with the previous entitlement is done, and the family is paid at the higher rate for the balance of the benefit year. This is applied only to the benefit year in which the change in marital status occurs.

**Q.28 Why can't my spouse or common-law partner obtain information about my OCCS payments?**

When the ministry obtains information to administer a program, each person's information is protected under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. You must give written authorization for a person, including your spouse or common-law partner, to act on your behalf before any information on your account can be released. This protects your right to privacy and ensures that your information is kept confidential and disclosed only to those to whom you have given permission.

The OCCS has an Authorization to Disclose Information form which authorizes the Ministry of Revenue to disclose personal information to a designated representative. Information on your account can be released when you complete this form and designate a representative (e.g., your spouse or common-law partner).

**Q.29 If I do not agree with an amount on the Entitlement Notice, what should I do?**

The amount of family earned income, family net income and qualifying child care expenses are obtained from the Canada Child Tax Benefit program. If you do not agree with any of these amounts, you should contact the Canada Revenue Agency at: [www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cntct/prv/on-eng.html](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/cntct/prv/on-eng.html).

If you do not agree with any other information on the Entitlement Notice, you have the right to file an objection within 90 days from the date on the Entitlement Notice. Call the Ministry of Revenue at 1 866 668-8297 to obtain a Notice of Objection form.

## More information

### Ontario Child Care Supplement for Working Families (OCCS) enquiries

This publication contains answers to the most common questions asked. For more information about the OCCS, or to obtain the most current version of this publication visit our website at [ontario.ca/revenue](http://ontario.ca/revenue) and enter number 173 in the find page field at the bottom of the webpage or contact the Ministry of Revenue at:

1 866 668-8297  
1 800 263-7776 teletypewriter (TTY)

or write to:

Ministry of Revenue  
OCCS  
33 King Street West  
PO Box 624  
Oshawa ON L1H 8H8

### OCB enquiries

For general information about the OCB, call toll-free at:

English & French                    1 866 821-7770  
TTY                                        1 800 387-5559

You can also visit [ontario.ca/childbenefit](http://ontario.ca/childbenefit).

*Cette publication est disponible en français sous le titre « Supplément de revenu de l'Ontario pour les familles travailleuses ayant des frais de garde d'enfants »*

*Vous pouvez en obtenir un exemplaire en appelant le 1 866 668-8297 ou en visitant [ontario.ca/revenu](http://ontario.ca/revenu).*

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