

CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Winter 2018



News for Families: Finding High-Quality Child Care

As a parent or caregiver of an infant, toddler or young child, finding high-quality child care is one of the most important decisions you will ever make for your child. Eighty-five percent of your child's brain grows in the years from birth to age 3. This means your child is **always** learning, so his or her child care environment must be high-quality to ensure your child gets the best chance to benefit from early learning.

So how do you find high-quality care? First, start your search with Child Care Aware of Washington, either online or via our statewide Family Center, to ensure that you are getting unbiased referrals to local licensed child care programs. Then create a list of the child care providers you think could meet your family's needs.

Next, it's time to call the providers on your list to find out if they have openings and if they offer the kinds of care you prefer. Once you have your list of potential providers narrowed down to about three, **visit each one in person**. Choosing a child care provider is simply not a decision you can make online, with an app or on the phone. Your child will be spending hours each day at their child care program—it is up to you to make sure it's right for them.

While visiting, pay attention to the way the child care staff talk to the children. Are they kind, nurturing and respectful? Make note of the program's cleanliness and the state of its supplies. Are the toys and books generally in good shape and safe for children, or are there only a few materials, or are the materials old, broken and unsafe? You can print our child care quality checklist and bring it with you to help keep track of what to look for. <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/family-resources-1/cca-of-wa-child-care-checklist>

You should also check to see if the program you are considering is participating in Early Achievers, Washington's framework to improve the quality of licensed child care and to provide families with an easy-to-understand rating system that measures child care program quality. (See page 3 for more details.)

Once you've narrowed your search down to one or two providers, make sure to review their licensing history online at the Washington State Department of Early Learning's Child Care Check: <https://del.wa.gov/check>.

Finding the right child care provider for your child is only the beginning. Once your child is attending, commit to building a strong relationship with your provider. The two of you can partner to enrich your child's development and to ensure that your child is safe, nurtured, happy and healthy.

Winter 2018 TABLE OF CONTENTS

Finding High-Quality Child Care	1
Early Achievers—Making a Positive Impact	2
CCA of WA Family Center—Making Connections	2
Help for Homeless Families	2
Resources for Families—Help Paying for Child Care	3
Great Resources at Your Local Library	3
Information for Families	4



Early Achievers—WA’s Quality Rating and Improvement System



Did you know there are more than 3,500 child care providers in Washington participating in Early Achievers, WA’s quality rating and improvement system? Of those, more than 1,000 have already had their quality validated by the University of Washington and have earned a “Quality Level of Excellence.” This means the provider is making intentional choices about improving the quality of the care they offer.

You can find out if your provider is participating in Early Achievers by asking them, or by checking online on the Washington State Department of Early Learning’s Child Care Check system at <https://del.wa.gov/check>.

What does it mean when a provider is participating in Early Achievers? It means that a provider is licensed and committed to providing high-quality care to children and families. Together with early learning coaches from Child Care Aware of Washington, Early Achievers participants engage in quality improvement activities designed to improve childhood outcomes.

Early Achievers also provides parents with a rating system that gives them unbiased information about child care program quality. Providers are rated on a scale of 2—5. (Level 1 simply means a child care program is licensed.) Higher rating levels indicate higher levels of program quality based upon the early learning environment, the qualifications of the caregiving staff, relationships with families and more. To learn more about Early Achievers and see how it is making a positive impact on children in child care, watch our short Early Achievers Impact Videos online at: <http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/early-achievers>.



CCA of WA Family Center Loves Making Important Connections for Families ~

written by Nikosi Davis, Family Center specialist

Working in the call center comes with many inspirational moments that only increase my passion for helping children and families, especially when there is success of helping a family find a quality child care that best fits their needs. A woman who I’ve recently helped was having a very hard time finding child care for her son due to the limited number of child care programs in her area in Clark County and paying for the child care cost.

After sending her the list of child care referrals and communicating with her about how she could receive a child care subsidy through DSHS Working Connections, she called back and announced that she had success finding a child care program for her son and was approved for most her monthly care coverage [through Working Connections]. This was a huge realization for me, knowing that I can truly help make a difference and bring peace and relief to someone’s life!

Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Homelessness across the state of Washington continues to rise, especially for families. Children experiencing homelessness often live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their physical environments and relationships. This can slow their emotional, cognitive and behavioral development. This is why it is so important for young children experiencing homelessness to have access to safe, stable and nurturing child care programs.

What does homelessness look like for families today? Families who live temporarily with family or friends; do not have a home; live in a shelter, car or park; live in transitional housing; or live in Domestic Violence program housing are all considered homeless.

There is help available for homeless families with young children to find and pay for quality child care. For more information, please call the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.

Resources for Families—Help Paying for Child Care

Many families need help paying for child care. Thankfully, there are options available to help. In Washington the biggest source of child care payment assistance is Working Connections Child Care. Our Family Center can help you find out if you are eligible. Learn more about Working Connections, and about other options, on our website here: <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/family-resources-1/need-help-paying-for-child-care>.

Here are some other sources of support:

ECEAP—state funded preschool—site locator— https://del.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/ECEAP_Site_Locator_-_20English.pdf

Head Start—federally funded preschool—site locator— <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>

Child Care Financial Assistance (CCFA) for residents of Bellevue, Kent or Redmond—1-206-329-1011, ext. 268

City of Seattle Child Care Subsidy (through Seattle’s Human Services Department) - 1-206-386-1050

City of Seattle College Students— [Seattle Milk Fund https://www.seattlemilkfund.org/](https://www.seattlemilkfund.org/)

Military child care subsidy—<https://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistance/respite/military-families/>

Parent discounts— Many providers offer a sliding scale, multi-child discounts or scholarships. Talk to your child care provider directly for more information.

For more information about finding help paying for child care, visit our website at <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/family-resources-1/need-help-paying-for-child-care>.

Every Child Ready to Read: Talking, Singing, Reading, Writing, Playing

Spotlight On: Singing

Singing with young children is a critical component of early literacy. Why sing with young children? Songs help children develop listening skills. Most songs have a different note for each syllable. This helps children break down words so they hear individual sounds in a word.

Clapping or stomping along to a rhythm helps children hear and feel the syllables in words and helps them improve motor skills. Singing also slows down language so children can hear different parts of words and notice how these words are alike and different.

Books You Can Sing With Young Children—look for these books at your local library:

- Groovy Joe: Dance Party Countdown by Eric Litwin
- Let’s Sing a Lullaby with the Brave Cowboy by Jan Thomas
- Down by the Barn by Will Hillenbrand
- I Ain’t Gonna Paint No More! by Karen Beaumont
- The Lady With The Alligator Purse Adapted by Nadine Bernard Westcott
- The Neighborhood Sing-Along by Nina Crews
- It's raining, It's pouring! Performed by Peter, Paul and Mary
- The Croakey Pokey by Ethan Long
- The Animal Boogie by Debbie Harter





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Children’s Alliance	(800) 854-5437	www.childrensalliance.org
Find your WA State legislator		app.leg.wa.gov/
Child Development		
Seattle Children’s Hospital— classes & wellness information	(866) 987-2000 (206) 987-2000	www.seattlechildrens.org
Parenting Counts	(800) 637-3652	www.parentingcounts.org
The Center for Children with Special Needs	(866) 987-2500	www.cshcn.org
Zero to Three		www.zerotothree.org
Thrive Washington		https://thrivewa.org
American Academy of Pediatrics		www.healthychildren.org
Community Resources		
Parent Trust for Washington	(800) 932-4673	www.parenttrust.org
Parent Help 123	(800) 322-2588	www.parenthelp123.org
Department of Early Learning	(866) 482-4325	www.del.wa.gov
Apple Health	(855) 900-3066	www.applehealth.org
Washington Information Network	211	www.win211.org



Comments: (206) 329-1011 x 264
Family Center: (800) 446-1114

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