

CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Fall 2018



News for Families:

What's the best way to search for quality, licensed child care? Is it word-of-mouth, checking online classified ads like Craigslist or a Google search?

The best way to find child care is to check with Washington's child care resource and referral service—Child Care Aware of Washington. We've been providing free, unbiased local child care referrals to families for almost 30 years. All of the full-day providers in our database are licensed in Washington, so you know they have met basic health and safety requirements. (Part-day preschool programs that operate for less than four hours per day are exempt from licensing.)

Our referrals are free for families seeking child care, and it doesn't cost providers anything to be included in our database, too. This means our referrals are unbiased and not based upon how much money a provider has paid to run an ad.

Families can search for child care online anytime at <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families>, or they can contact our Family Center Monday — Friday, 8:30 am—4:30 pm at 1-800-446-1114. Our referral representatives can help families find care and can even provide information about various programs available to help eligible families pay for child care.

We can also explain what families need to know before they tour child care programs so they can be better informed child care consumers. We recently heard from one mom who has never used child care before. She said: "I appreciate this service so much. I recommend it to everyone searching for child care."

Last fiscal year we helped more than 16,000 families find child care for over 24,000 children across the state. Soon we will be able to help even more families because we are improving our online search. Stay tuned for more information about when the new online search tool will debut.

Once your child is attending child care, it's important to make sure you get involved in your child's care. Visit your child from time to time during the day to see how they are doing, chat with provider and be sure to attend any parent-teacher conferences or family events.

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Early Achievers—Helping Child Care Providers Improve Quality

You know your child needs high-quality child care in order to grow and thrive during these most important early years. But how do you measure quality? How can you be sure a child care provider you are interested in is as committed to quality child care as you are? One way to be sure is to check to see if the provider is participating in Early Achievers, Washington’s framework for integrating high-quality practices into licensed child care programs across the state.

Did you know that 71 percent of Washington’s licensed child care providers are participating in Early Achievers? That’s more than 3,500 licensed family home and center-based providers serving over 74,000 children! Early Achievers is free to programs to join, and it provides a wealth of supports and resources to help providers increase both the quality of their early learning environments and the quality of their caregiver-to-child interactions. These are important elements in high-quality programs.

Early Achievers also provides families with a rating system that helps them better understand a particular program’s quality. Early Achievers programs are rated by the University of Washington and earn ratings from Level 2 to Level 5. A Level 3 or higher in Early Achievers is considered to be a “Quality Level of Excellence.”

Look for the Early Achievers logo online when you are searching for child care, and/or at your child’s program, or ask your provider if they are participating. Visit our website to learn more:

<http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/early-achievers>.



Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Child Care Aware of Washington’s Family Center has helped hundreds of families with young children who are experiencing homelessness across the state. And with the number of families experiencing homelessness continuing to rise, we expect that number to grow.

Children experiencing homelessness often live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their physical environments and relationships, impairing 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. Research has shown that quality child care can even act as a buffer for young children against the harmful effects of toxic stress.



Children’s chalk drawings outside a women’s and children’s shelter, Seattle

Child Care Aware of WA can help families with young children who are experiencing homelessness find quality child care at no cost to them. For more information, please visit us online at <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/child-care-aware-of-washington-services-for-homeless-families> or call 1-800-446-1114.

Need Help Paying for Child Care?

Child care is expensive. In some cases it costs more to have one infant in child care for a year than it does to cover a year’s tuition at a public university! And did you know that the cost of caring for one infant in a center consumes 51 percent of the median income of single moms in Washington?



Thankfully there is help available. Visit us online at <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/family-resources-1/need-help-paying-for-child-care> to see if your family is eligible for any of the resources we have found to be the most helpful. You can also learn what the average cost of child care is in your area.

Did you know there is fee assistance available to military families? There is. It is provided by Child Care Aware of America. Learn more about the programs available to help military families here: <http://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/>.

The Gift of Speaking More Than One Language

Teaching children multiple languages is one of the greatest gifts a parent or caregiver can give their children. This is especially true for families whose first language may not be English. Learning your family's home language is an important way to help children connect to their culture, and support a family's culture for future generations. Learning a second language is also much easier for children than adults, so there is no better time to learn.

There are many additional benefits that come with learning more than one language:

- Better social and emotional skills/empathy, such as the skill to decide what language to use depending on the person and place.
- Increased executive functioning (higher thinking) skills, such as:
 - ◊ Imaginative thinking
 - ◊ Problem solving
 - ◊ Self-regulation
 - ◊ Memorizing
 - ◊ Understanding of how language works
- Increased job and college opportunities
- Greater academic outcomes, such as: better grades, improved attendance, fewer disciplinary issues and more parent involvement

Parents can help children learn their home language by simply talking with their children as they go through their daily routines, building language skills and vocabulary along the way. Every day activities such as singing songs, telling stories, and reading to children are natural ways of communicating to children the family's home language and culture. Children benefit by feeling positive about their home language and culture, and to learn from the people who are best able to teach them.

By building relationships with people that speak multiple languages, you may learn more about different cultures creating unity and mutual respect.

Adapted from: <https://speakyourlanguage.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Speak-Your-Language-Flyer-ENGLISH.pdf>

Should You Get Your Child Vaccinated for the Flu?

Pediatricians recommend that all people over the age of six months get the flu vaccine each year. Why each year? Because the flu changes each year, so the flu vaccines do as well.



The common myth about people catching the flu from the vaccine, is just that, a myth, according to doctors and researchers. Because it takes the body two weeks to become fully immunized, people who catch the flu soon after vaccination caught the illness before their body was fully protected.

The best time to get the flu vaccine is in late September or early October, when the flu season is just beginning. Contact your pediatrician to find out when you can get your child protected.

Child Care Quality Checklist

If you have visits and tours planned with local child care programs, take our free child care quality checklist with you to help you make sure any programs you are considering are offering quality care. It can also help you decide which program will work best for you and your child(ren). You can find it online here: <http://wa.childcareaware.org/families/child-care-quality-checklist>

Advocacy for Families

It is never too early or too late to let your legislators in both Washington, D.C. and Olympia know you support investment in high-quality child care.

Right now at the federal level the Child Care for Working Families Act (CCWFA) is making its way through Congress. If passed, this legislation would help ensure that every family that needs child care has access to high-quality, affordable programs. You can help support the CCWFA by contacting your federal representatives and telling them you support this bill.

On the state level, the 2019 legislative session will be very important to the child care field as the state deals with years of low reimbursement rates paid to child care providers, as well as reduced funding for Early Achievers.

Visit our Action Center today to quickly email your representatives. <http://wa.childcareaware.org/advocacy>



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Advocacy:	Phone:	Website
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	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
PAVE Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment	1-800-5-PARENT	https://wapave.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 Children, Youth, and Families	(866) 482-4325	https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/
Apple Health	(855) 900-3066	www.applehealth.org
Washington Information Network	211	www.win211.org



Comments: (206) 329-1011
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