

FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Summer 2019



Early Math Matters!

The early math skills that children develop at an early age—before entering school—are critical to later school achievement. Children who begin school with poor math skills often struggle to catch up.

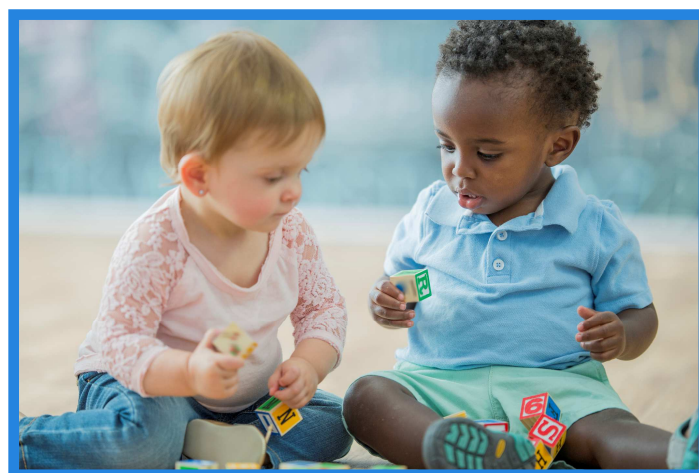
All children should be supported from the beginning in developing their ability to learn math. Families can do this by integrating math into play, daily routines, reading, and taking time to create “math moments” throughout the day. Using picture books can be an engaging way for families to help children develop early math skills that can help prepare them for math activities they will come across in school.

Children are curious! They can learn to think about math at an early age through play and through playful structured learning opportunities. One way families can support their child’s early math skills is by using picture books for counting. First, look through the book from your child’s perspective. Think about what might help your child understand the math on the page or what they might find confusing. Next, look through the book from a math perspective. What are some fun ways you can help your child count and what questions can you come up with to help with their understanding? Your child’s response to questions provides important information to you about what they know and understand.

During reading, you can ask some questions to your child that are simple to answer, addressing what they see directly on the page. For example, you can ask, “What animal is this?” Once they answer, you can explore their response by affirming their answer and saying, “What do you see on this animal?” This will help expand their thinking and allow for great back-and-forth conversations.

Here are some great picture books and other resources to encourage early counting skills:

- *Feast for 10* by Cathryn Falwell
- *A Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle
- *Bear Counts* by Karma Wilson & Jane Chapman
- *How Do Dinosaurs Count to Ten?* by Jane Yolen & Mark Teague
- Zeno Math has some great early math games available online: <https://zenomath.org/toolbox/early-learning-games/>
- Visit Vroom for fun activities to help children learn: <https://www.vroom.org>



By Courtney Nolen-Viducich, M.S., Professional Development Manager at Child Care Resources

Looking for Child Care? Try Our New Search!

For more than 30 years, Child Care Aware of Washington has been helping families find child care by providing free, unbiased local child care referrals. With updates to our child care search tool, looking for child care from your home or on the go has never been easier. Child Care Aware of Washington has improved our online child care search making it super-easy to use on mobile devices. Our online search includes only licensed and/or regulated child care providers, meaning only providers that have met state health and safety standards can be found in our database. Plus, our child care search is free to both providers and to families, so you don't have to worry that a provider only looks good online because they paid for an ad.

Families can search for child care online anytime at <https://childcareawarewa.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, connect them with other local resources and specialized care options, and can even provide information about programs available to help eligible families pay for child care.

Our updated search includes even more options to help you find the right program for your family. We include information on languages that child care providers speak as well as the primary language of instruction. Our child care search also includes referrals to before- and after-school care for children up to 12 years old. By calling the Family Center, referral representatives can even search for child care options that provide transportation to and from schools to their facilities.

Last year, more than 16,000 families found high-quality child care with the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center. With our redesigned website and updated search, we can help even more families find the care they need. Give the Family Center a call or visit our website.



Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Did you know there are more than 33,000 children under age 6 who are experiencing homelessness in Washington? Child Care Aware of Washington's Family Center helps these children by connecting their families to licensed child care programs at no cost to them for four months.

Children experiencing homelessness live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their environments and relationships. These experiences can impair their emotional, cognitive and behavioral development. That's why it is critical that children experiencing homelessness have access to safe, stable and nurturing child care.

You can learn about the program in our video "The Child Care Difference for Young Children Experiencing Homelessness" at <https://childcareawarewa.org/services-for-families-experiencing-homelessness/>. For more information, please call the Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.

Child Care Quality Checklist

Do you have visits and tours planned with local child care programs? Child care providers have different styles and skills to meet the needs of the children they care for. You want to be sure that a program is the right one for your family.

Before you go, take our free child care quality checklist with you to help you make sure any programs you consider are offering quality care. It can also help you decide which program will work best for you and your child or children.

Find it on our website: <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>.



Resources for Families: Child Development

Watching your child grow and learn new things is one of the most rewarding parts of parenthood. Those first teeth, first steps and first play dates are so exciting. But how can you be sure they are reaching developmental milestones?

While every child and family is different, there are certain milestones that children should make during the years from birth to age 5. Here are some great resources where you can learn more. Don't forget the importance of speaking with your pediatrician if you have any questions or concerns. Many child care providers have years of experience and child development expertise, making them a great resource too.

- ParentHelp 123/Help Me Grow Washington—website packed with great information about child development—<http://www.parenthelp123.org/child-development/help-me-grow-washington>
- Vroom—Fun and easy app-based “brain-building” everyday activities for parents and children—<https://www.vroom.org/>
- Zero to Three—a national organization with a website full of great information about everything from child development to early literacy and more—<https://www.zerotothree.org/>
- Sesame Street in Communities, Traumatic Experiences—help for families with young children who have experienced difficult, traumatic events—<https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/traumatic-events>

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 so that every child gets the opportunity to thrive. Legislators need to hear from families about their child care experiences so that they make policies that support families like yours. Here are some great ways to make your voice heard.

Child Care Works is a national advocacy movement dedicated to uplifting the voices of families, providers, and advocates to support quality child care for all. You can share your child care story with them at <https://childcareworks.org/shareyourstory>.

You can also visit the Child Care Aware of Washington website any time to easily get connected with your legislators and tell them about your child care experiences. If you sign up on our Action Center, we will send you alerts when there are new opportunities to advocate.

Visit our Action Center today to quickly email your representatives: <https://childcareawarewa.org/advocacy>.

Need Help Paying for Child Care?

Child care is expensive and prices are rising all the time. The average cost of child care for an infant in Washington is even more than the cost to cover a year of tuition at our state's universities! And did you know that the cost of caring for one infant in a center is more than half of the median income of single moms in Washington?

Thankfully there is help available. Visit the Child Care Aware of Washington website at <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/> to see if your family is eligible for any of the resources available to help families pay for child care. You can also learn what the average cost of child care is in your area.

For military families, there is a fee assistance program provided by Child Care Aware of America. To learn more about it, visit Child Care Aware of America online: <http://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespice/military-families/>.





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Respond to this reader survey by October 15th, 2019 for a chance to win a \$25 Amazon gift card:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/H5FT5XL>

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



Family Center: (800) 446-1114

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