



# FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Vol. 4, Issue 1

## Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center News for Families

These are challenging times for all of us. Raising children during a global pandemic is not likely to have ever crossed our minds at the beginning of our parenting journeys. And yet, here we are.

Thankfully, there are many good sources of support and information to help us be the best parents and caregivers we can be during these difficult times. And it's important to remember two things most of all—nothing is better for your child than your loving attention, and parents are children's first teachers.

This doesn't mean that every moment of your day and everything you do must be 100% focused on being perfect role models of calm throughout this crisis. Instead, it simply means that parents matter, and that spending some time every day simply playing and enjoying time with your child is important. It can make a positive difference in how your child copes with the changes the COVID-19 outbreak has caused.

So what can we as parents do to help our children during this time? Here are a few tips from the experts:

- Try to stick to normal day-to-day routines as much as possible, even if it means creating new routines now that school-age children are out of school.
- Make time to play with younger children, and time to just “hang out” with older ones.
- Listen to children's questions and provide age-appropriate answers.
- Try to make sure everyone eats well and gets plenty of rest—stress is harder to manage when people are hungry and tired.
- Limit how much COVID-19 news children hear.

For more tips on how to talk to children about the pandemic, visit <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-coronavirus>.

If you are not working from home and your child care program closes, please call our Family Center for help finding new child care. We are fully operational during this crisis. <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>

### News for Families

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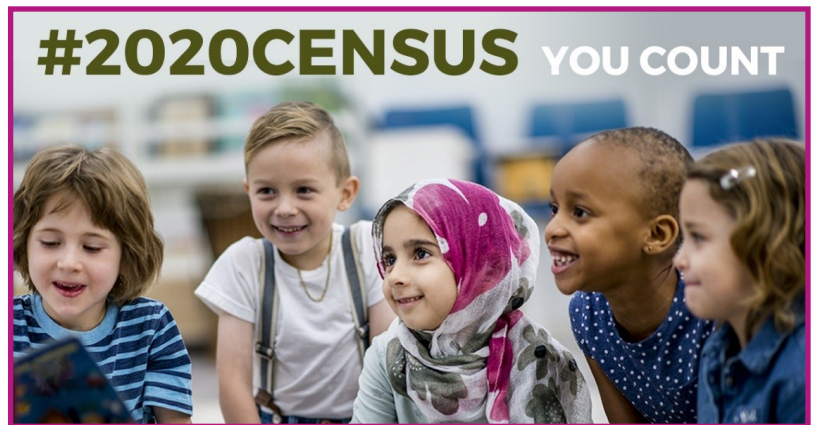
## Be Counted in the 2020 Census

Did you know that when people are not counted in the census, their communities don't get the funding they need to make sure everyone thrives? And did you also know that when people are missed in the census their state could lose representation in the U.S. Congress? Both are true, so it is very important that everyone counts in this year's census.

**There are no citizenship questions on the census and information is confidential.** In fact, the Census Bureau has one of the strongest privacy guarantees in the federal government. If a Census Bureau employee reveals personal data collected in the census, that person can spend up to five years in jail or pay a fine as large as \$250,000.

Young children are among the most under-counted populations in the census, so Child Care Aware of Washington is working to help prevent another under-count of young children this time. Our state received \$16.7 billion in 2016 based on data from the 2010 census, when an estimated 5% of young children were not counted. That means Washington did not get all of the funding it needs to make sure children and families have what they need to thrive, like child care subsidies, great schools, healthcare and nutritious food.

Census materials were mailed to homes last month. It's quick and easy to respond to the census online. Completing the census online means that no census worker will come to your home. Make sure to count everyone in your family.



## Homelessness Help

Child Care Aware of Washington's Family Center helps families with young children who are experiencing homelessness find child care at no cost to them for up to one year.

Children who are experiencing homelessness frequently live in unpredictable, chaotic circumstances, with disruptions in their environments and relationships. These experiences can impair their emotional, cognitive and behavioral development. This is why it is critical that young children experiencing homelessness 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.

For more information, please visit us at <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/> or call 1-800-446-1114.

## Child Care During COVID-19—Tips From a Provider

We asked child care providers to share their wisdom in handling child care during this crisis. One Tacoma provider shared these tips:

- 1) Keep your kids home when they're sick.
- 2) Keep your kids home when you're home.
- 3) Practice washing hands at home so it's not foreign to kids when they get to child care.
- 4) Drink plenty of water.
- 5) Answer the phone when your provider calls— it could be an emergency.

## Need Help Paying for Child Care?

Child care is expensive. The average cost of child care for an infant in Washington is more than the cost to cover a year's tuition at our state's universities!

Thankfully there is help available. Visit us online at <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/> to see if your family is eligible for any of the resources we have found to be the most helpful. Or, call our Family Center at 1-800-446-1114 M—F 8:30—4:30 for help.

Military families can learn about the fee assistance program run by Child Care Aware of America online at Child Care Aware of America. <http://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespite/military-families/>.



## Play & Learn Groups for Caregivers & Children

Child Care Aware of Washington supports more than 100 facilitated play and learn groups for caregivers and children around Washington. Right now, most play groups are suspended due to the COVID-19 outbreak. When the crisis has passed, the groups will once again be able to help family, friend and neighbor caregivers support young children's early development through play. In the meantime, if you are interested in activities to do remotely, please contact our Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.

Facilitated play groups create opportunities to build connections with other families and caregivers with young children. For families that choose family, friends and/or neighbors to care for their children, attending a play and learn group provides children with opportunities to play and learn alongside peers, connections to other families and links to community resources to help support school readiness for young children.

Our Family Center can help you find a play and learn group near you once the COVID-19 pandemic is over. <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>



## Early Achievers—Making a Difference for Washington's Children & Families

Washington's Early Achievers program is helping child care providers across our state to improve the quality of their programs. What is Early Achievers? It is a free, voluntary quality improvement program that helps providers improve their quality. Providers set their own goals and work one-on-one with Child Care Aware of Washington's Early Achievers coaches.

Our coaches' early learning expertise helps providers with everything from improving early learning environments to strengthening the interactions providers have with children and families. There are more than 3,500 providers participating in Early Achievers, and over 74,000 young children enrolled in Early Achievers programs. Over 98 percent of the providers participating say they have improved the quality of care they provide.

Early Achievers also gives families a rating system to help 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 5. A Level 3 or higher is considered to be a "Quality Level of Excellence." To see what high-quality child care looks like and how Early Achievers is making an impact, watch our short Early Achievers Impact videos online here: <https://childcareawarewa.org/providers/early-achievers-success-stories/>



### Help Young Children Wash Their Hands

"Wash your hands!" It has become the mantra for the COVID outbreak. Everyone is telling everyone to wash their hands. But with young children, getting them to participate and do a good job can be easier said than done.

We heard from some child care providers that when younger children see older children washing their hands, they want to join in, so if you have older and younger children, see if you can get the older ones to lead by example in how to wash hands effectively for at least 20 seconds.

Another way to help kids suds up is to sing a song while doing it. We've all heard about singing the Happy Birthday song twice to get a full 20 seconds of hand-washing, but have you heard of the super-famous Baby Shark song being turned into a hand-washing song? You can view and listen to the updated lyrics here: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/28/us/baby-shark-wash-your-hands-trnd/index.html>

And yes, the updated song sticks in your mind just as much.





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Advocacy:	Phone:	Website
Children's Alliance	(800) 854-5437	<a href="http://www.childrensalliance.org">www.childrensalliance.org</a>
Find your WA State legislator		<a href="http://app.leg.wa.gov/">app.leg.wa.gov/</a>
Child Development		
Seattle Children's Hospital— classes & wellness information	(866) 987-2000	<a href="http://www.seattlechildrens.org">www.seattlechildrens.org</a>
Parenting Counts	(800) 637-3652	<a href="http://www.parentingcounts.org">www.parentingcounts.org</a>
The Center for Children with Special Needs	(866) 987-2500	<a href="http://www.cshcn.org">www.cshcn.org</a>
Zero to Three		<a href="http://www.zerotothree.org">www.zerotothree.org</a>
PAVE Partnerships for Action, Voices for Empowerment	1-800-5-PARENT	<a href="https://wapave.org/">https://wapave.org/</a>
American Academy of Pediatrics		<a href="http://www.healthychildren.org">www.healthychildren.org</a>
Community Resources		
Parent Trust for Washington	(800) 932-4673	<a href="http://www.parenttrust.org">www.parenttrust.org</a>
Parent Help 123	(800) 322-2588	<a href="http://www.parenthelp123.org">www.parenthelp123.org</a>
Department of Children, Youth, and Families	(866) 482-4325	<a href="https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/">https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/</a>
Apple Health	(855) 900-3066	<a href="http://www.applehealth.org">www.applehealth.org</a>
Washington Information Network	211	<a href="http://www.win211.org">www.win211.org</a>



Family Center: (800) 446-1114

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