

# CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Summer 2018



## News for Families: A New School Year Ahead

Did you know August is our busiest time of year at the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center? It is. Back-to-school for families with young children often means back to child care during the school year, or perhaps enrolling in child care for the first time.

Whether you are searching for child care for the first time or the 20th time, the staff at the Family Center is always ready to help. Last fiscal year we provided more than 14,400 referrals to families needing care for over 20,000 children. Our knowledgeable representatives can help families find licensed child care in their areas in any language, and they can provide important information about resources available to help eligible families cover the cost of child care. Call us at 1-800-446-1114.



With the new school year almost here, some families whose children attend child care may see some changes. Many providers are using an electronic time and attendance system for the first time. The system runs on PCs, tablets or smart phones and makes it easy for families to sign their child(ren) in and out of care. It also helps child care providers prevent billing errors.

If you've found child care with the help of our Family Center you can rest assured that your provider is licensed. Being licensed means a program has been inspected by the state and is meeting important health and safety regulations. If you are searching for child care, make sure any program you choose is licensed. This way you know the provider has had a criminal background check, has received safe sleep and first aid training and more. Choosing unlicensed child care can be risky, because not all unlicensed programs follow health and safety regulations. If you are not sure if a child care program is licensed, it is always okay to ask.

Once your child(ren) are 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 in the program, chat with provider and be sure to attend any parent-teacher conferences or family events. Taking the time to build a positive relationship with your child care provider will allow for easier communications between you both, and help make sure your child(ren) is receiving the care they need.

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## Help for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Child Care Aware of Washington's Family Center has helped hundreds of families with young children that are experiencing homelessness across the state since July 1 of last year. 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.

There is help available for families with young children who are experiencing homelessness to 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.



## 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.



More than 3,500 licensed family home and center-based providers are participating in Early Achievers. Together they serve more than 73,000 children. Early Achievers is free to programs to join, and it provides a wealth of supports and resources to help them 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:

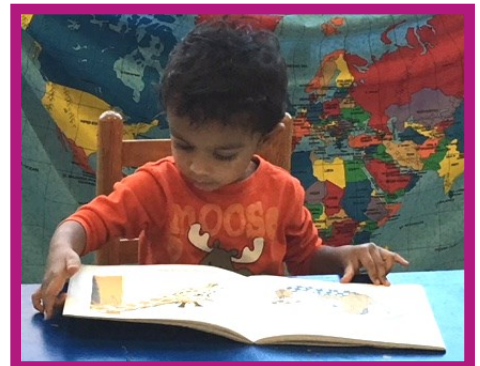
<http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/early-achievers>.

## Visit Libraries This Summer and Possibly Win Prizes

Libraries can be a great place to take little ones, especially during the summer where a quiet, air-conditioned space for reading is a perfect summer cool-down. Check out how you can visit five libraries and be entered into a contest for a book store gift card.

<http://www.washingtoncenterforthebook.org/passport/>

Many libraries offer summer reading programs and story times for little ones. Call your local library for details.





## Resources for Families - Teaching Children About, and Celebrating, Diversity

Children begin to form their views on differences in people at a very young age. One of the most important things parents can do for their children is teach them about, and celebrate, diversity. And one of the best ways to do this is to not be afraid to have conversations about race with young children.

“Many of us, particularly white people, grew up thinking there was something wrong with noticing racial differences. But young children are experiencing privilege, discrimination and stereotypes because of their race,” said Ilsa Govan, co-founder of Cultures Connecting, a consulting firm dedicated to addressing cultural competence and race relations in the 21st century.

When adults avoid these conversations or show our discomfort with them, children learn they shouldn’t talk about race. And this avoidance makes it very hard to understand different realities, much less advocate for equity and justice. “When we don’t teach young people about race, they draw their own conclusions.”

Ilsa provided a great example from her own experience as an elementary school teacher. She had a conversation with a white third grader who said he thought black children didn’t care about education and didn’t go to school very much. Instead of quickly correcting him, Ilsa asked him to tell her more about why he thought this. He said he had seen only one black student at his previous school in a mostly-white suburb, so he thought black kids didn’t go to school. With no exposure to racial differences, and no previous conversations about them, this child drew his own conclusion.

When parents of young children get comfortable with conversations about race, diversity and culture, it opens the door for better foundational understanding of these important issues and can help foster positive views about diversity.

Ilsa recommends the publishing company Lee & Low Books, <https://www.leeandlow.com>, for a selection of multicultural books for all ages. Books can be a great way to get the conversation started.



### 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!

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/>.

### 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 we are preparing for a very important legislative session next year when the state must contend with years of underpayment to providers who accept children on state subsidies, and with a \$12 million budget cut to 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	<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 (206) 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>
Thrive Washington		<a href="https://thrivewa.org">https://thrivewa.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 Early Learning	(866) 482-4325	<a href="http://www.del.wa.gov">www.del.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>



*Comments: (206) 329-1011*

*Family Center: (800) 446-1114*

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