

CHILD CARE AWARE OF WASHINGTON FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Winter 2019



News for Families:

Are you looking for child care? We can help! Child Care Aware of Washington has been helping families find child care by providing free, unbiased local child care referrals for 30 years. All 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.)

With recent updates to the Child Care Aware of Washington website, looking for child care has never been easier. The website is available in multiple languages, easier to navigate, and streamlined for use on mobile devices so you can look for child care wherever you are.

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 and can even provide information about programs that are available to help eligible families pay for child care.

Our referrals are free for families seeking child care, and it doesn't cost providers anything to be included in our database. This means our referrals are unbiased and don't depend on how much money a provider has paid to run an ad. We can also explain what families need to know before they tour child care programs so they can be better informed child care consumers.

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, we can help even more families find the care they need. Give the Family Center a call or look us up on the web.

Once you find a child care provider, make a visit to the program to make sure that it meets your family's and child's needs. Once your child is attending, drop in from time to time during the day to see how they are doing and chat with your provider.

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Early Achievers—Making a Difference for Washington’s Children

Did you know that Washington’s Early Achievers quality framework is helping to improve the quality of child care across the state, in both center and home-based programs? It is! Currently there are more than 3,500 providers participating, and over 74,000 young children enrolled in Early Achievers programs.

So what exactly 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 and guidance helps providers with everything from improving early learning environments and materials, to strengthening the interactions providers have with children and families.

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.”

To find out if your child’s provider is participating in Early Achievers, or to see if a provider you are considering is, look for the Early Achievers logo, or simply ask the provider.

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 for Families Experiencing Homelessness

Did you know that 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 four months? Watch our new video about this amazing program at <https://childcareawarewa.org/services-for-families-experiencing-homelessness/>.

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.

Child Care Aware of Washington is here to help families experiencing homelessness find quality child care at no cost to them. For more information, please visit us online at <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/> or call the Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.

Child Care Advocacy for Families

It is always the right time to let your legislators in both Washington, D.C. and Olympia know you support investment in high-quality child care. Your voice can really make a difference.

Right now, lawmakers are considering the Washington Child Care Access Now Act. If passed, this legislation would help ensure that every family in Washington that needs child care has access to high-quality, affordable child care programs. It also would help child care programs by raising the state reimbursement rates for subsidized child care.

The state legislature is also considering a bill to make improvements to Early Achievers, our state’s quality rating and improvement system for child care. The recommendations for improvement come from providers themselves.

You can help make child care more accessible and affordable by contacting your state representatives and telling them you support



investment in high-quality child care. Visit our Action Center today to quickly email your representatives at <https://childcareawarewa.org/advocacy>.

Listening to Music Helps Babies Learn

Parents have been singing lullabies to their babies for centuries, because it can be a great way to get them to fall asleep. Did you know that it can help their development too? Children's hearing is one of the first senses they develop and music can boost their progress as they start to make sense of the world. New research shows that listening to music with your baby can help in many ways:

- As infants learn to form sounds, they mimic what they hear. Because music has rhythm, it can help them progress. In fact, tapping along to a beat is linked with increased reading ability later in life. Try clapping your baby's hands as you listen to a song.
- Playing with your baby can strengthen your relationship. Dancing and moving to music with your baby releases the same bonding hormones produced during nursing. And studies have shown that babies who move to the music are easier to soothe, smile more and are more likely to explore their environment than those who only listen.
- Dancing to music helps babies develop movement and coordination skills.
- Music that has lyrics can help babies develop language. Long before they start talking, infants are taking in information from what they hear and see. Rhyming songs are especially effective at helping children learn words.
- Lullabies and calming songs have been shown to have a positive effect on children's moods. And silly songs help children learn social skills and the meanings of words.
- There is a reason children often want to hear the same songs again and again. Repetition helps with both learning new words and with building memories.

So don't be shy about listening to music with your child. You can even try to make up a rhyme while you are bathing, feeding or changing your baby. It will help them learn and you might have some fun too!

For more information about music and child development, visit: <https://www.naeyc.org/resources/topics/music-and-songs>.

Early Brain Development and Child Health

Babies are born learning. They depend on their parents, families and caregivers to make sure they have a strong foundation to build on. Experiences in the first years of a child's life can have lifelong effects, both positive and negative.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has some great resources to help families track development, learn about child health and tips for parents on what they can do to nurture their child's learning.

For more information, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/early-brain-development.html>.



Child Care Quality Checklist

Do you have visits and tours planned with local child care programs? Before you go, 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 or children. You can find it online here: <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>.

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! 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 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. 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. Learn more about it online at Child Care Aware of America. <http://usa.childcareaware.org/fee-assistancerespit/military-families/>.



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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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Published Quarterly