

# FAMILY CENTER NEWS

Spring 2019



## Connect with a Play and Learn Group in Your Community

Did you know that nearly 75% of children in Washington under the age of five are in the regular informal care of parents, extended family members, friends, or neighbors? Maybe this describes your family!

Facilitated play groups are one way Child Care Aware of Washington assists caregivers by creating networks of support for family members, friends, and neighbors living in communities across our state. At facilitated playgroups, children learn and play together while caregivers have an opportunity to connect with other families and caregivers, talk to early learning professionals, learn and share knowledge and resources, and find out about other upcoming learning opportunities and community events. These facilitated play groups are held in community centers, libraries and schools, and are facilitated in more than a dozen different languages.

Facilitated playgroups create opportunities to build connections with other families and caregivers with young children in your area. For families that are choosing family, friends and neighbors to care for their children, attending a play and learn group can help provide access to early opportunities that build a strong foundation for Kindergarten and beyond.

Facilitated playgroups are great examples of Child Care Aware of Washington's mission in action: creating and delivering early childhood programming in culturally responsive ways in order to give every child in Washington an opportunity to thrive.

Child Care Aware of Washington proudly supports more than 130 facilitated playgroups across the state. To find local, free play groups in your area or for more information about Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care, call the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.



## Why Movement is So Important for Babies

With modern technologies providing more ways to keep children out of harm's way, babies and toddlers often spend a lot of time in car seats, high chairs, strollers, and other types of equipment that limit movement. New research is showing that long times spent in equipment that restricts movement can impede child development and can even cause health challenges like motor delays (rolling, sitting, or standing), flat spots on the head, and tightness in the neck—this is being referred to by physicians as “Container Baby Syndrome.”

When babies wiggle, roll around, and move, they are learning the coordination skills needed to one day sit up, crawl, and walk. Increasing opportunities to allow babies to move freely in these ways promote active milestone achievement!

Health professionals strongly recommend safe sleep practices by placing a sleeping baby in a crib and on its back. When they are awake, however, babies benefit most by playing, moving, and exploring with supervision.

For more information about Container Baby Syndrome, read the Nationwide Children's Hospital article: <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/700childrens/2018/10/container-baby-syndrome>.



## 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-assistancerespite/military-families/>.

## Choosing Quality Child Care for Your Child

You know your child needs high-quality care in order to grow and thrive during these important early years. But how do you measure quality and how do you know if your child care provider is as committed to quality as you are? One way is to check if the provider is participating in Early Achievers.

To find out if a child care provider is participating in Early Achievers, look for the Early Achievers logo, ask the provider, or call the Family Center at 1-800-446-1114. To see what high-quality child care looks like and how Early Achievers is making an impact, watch our Early Achievers Impact videos online here: <https://childcareawarewa.org/providers/early-achievers-success-stories/>.

Early Achievers is a free, voluntary quality improvement program for child care. 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 help 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 to help them identify quality. Early Achievers programs are rated by the University of Washington and achieve ratings from Level 2 to Level 5. A Level 3 or higher in Early Achievers is considered a “Quality Level of Excellence.”

Washington's Early Achievers program is helping to improve the quality of child care across the state in both center and home-based programs. Currently there are more than 3,500 providers participating and over 74,000 young children enrolled in Early Achievers programs. Over 98 percent of the providers participating in Early Achievers say they have improved the quality of care they provide as a result of the supports and training they receive.



## Helping Families Find Child Care for 30 Years

Are you looking for child care? Contact the Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center! 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. 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 our Family Center website, looking for child care has never been easier. The website is available in multiple languages, easier to navigate, and easy to use on mobile devices. 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 can even provide information about programs available to help eligible families pay for child care.

Our referrals are free for families seeking child care, and we do not charge providers anything to be included in our database. That means our referrals are unbiased and don't depend on how much money a provider has paid to run an ad. We can also help explain what families need to know before they tour child care programs so they have more information about what to look for.

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, don't forget to visit 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 to see how they are doing and chat with your child care provider.



## 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.

Patty Murray has re-introduced the Child Care for Working Families Act (CCWFA) and it needs your support. 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.

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



## 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 consider 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: <https://childcareawarewa.org/families/>.

## 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.





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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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