



## Looking for Child Care?

The Child Care Aware of Washington Family Center can help you find a customized list of licensed child care programs in your area that meet your child care needs! **Search online at [childcareawarewa.org/families](http://childcareawarewa.org/families) or call our Family Center at 1-800-446-1114.**

**Take this Child Care Quality Checklist with you when you tour child care programs.**

### Group Size/Ratio and Learning Environment

- Are there enough adults to care for your child? (See ratios and group sizes, p.3.) Is the room full to capacity or do they choose to have a lower staff-to-child ratio in each classroom?
- Are the activities appropriate for my child's age and interest?
- What is the typical daily schedule?
- Do the teacher's interactions encourage children to learn? Are the activities engaging?
- Do the children watch TV, DVDs or videos? If so, how frequently?
- Do the children have plenty of active outdoor play time each day? Do they go on field trips?
- Does the program reflect the cultural, ethnic, religious and lifestyle diversity of the families within the community?
- Does the staff encourage language, social and problem-solving skills when talking with children?
- Are you comfortable with the way the provider disciplines and resolves conflicts between children?
- Does the environment feel right for your child and family? Will your child be happy there?

### Staff Professionalism, Training and Turnover

- What experience and education do the staff/caregivers have? Do they have their AA, BA, or MA in Early Child Education?
- Do staff receive on-going education and training to better serve children with special needs?
- How long has the staff worked at the center/home? Do staff/caregivers stay long enough to create a stable environment for children?
- What do you notice in conversations with the staff/caregiver that shows you they respect and value the cultural, ethnic, religious, linguistic and lifestyle diversity of the families?

### Health and Safety

- Are meals and snacks scheduled at appropriate times and do they include a variety of nutritious foods?
- Are the emergency phone numbers clearly posted? Do they have a natural disaster plan?
- Is the center/home clean and free of clutter? Does the equipment appear to be safe and in good repair?
- Are fire drills held regularly and recorded? Are any fire exits blocked? Is the fire escape plan posted?
- Is the outdoor play area safe and fenced?

- What are the security measures surrounding drop off and pick-up times? How are strangers excluded?
- Is transportation provided to school or field trips? What safety measures are followed?

### Family Relationships and Participation

- Does the program accept different subsidy payments? Are all families, regardless of economic background, welcomed?
- Is the toilet training approach compatible with yours?
- Do staff provide developmental screenings for children and track their progress?
- Does the program prepare children for new transitions such as Kindergarten or a new classroom. Do they include families in the process?
- Does the program have ways to ask for your feedback on your child's experience?
- Is it explained that, legally, you can have free access to your child while they are in care.
- Does the program have a Parent Handbook? This is required for state licensing and should include: admission/enrollment procedures, hours, rates, meals and snacks, disciplinary philosophy, medical and emergency procedures, absence, illness and vacation policies.

### Quality Improvement

- Is the program participating in quality improvement efforts such as the Early Achievers program? It is free to both providers and parents and supports the quality improvement efforts of providers while providing parents with an easy-to-understand rating system on child care quality. Find more details at [childcareawarewa.org/providers/early-achievers](http://childcareawarewa.org/providers/early-achievers).
- Is the center or home nationally accredited?

### Licensing, Complaints and References

- Before selecting a program, find out about its complaint history by visiting <https://www.findchildcarewa.org/>
- Ask to see the provider's license and Investigative Reports for the past three years.
- Ask for references of other families who have used the provider and call them to learn about their experiences.