

Child Care Resource and Referral
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(417) 887-3545 OR 1-800-743-0063



YOUR GUIDE TO CHOOSING QUALITY CHILD CARE

About Child Care Resource and Referral...

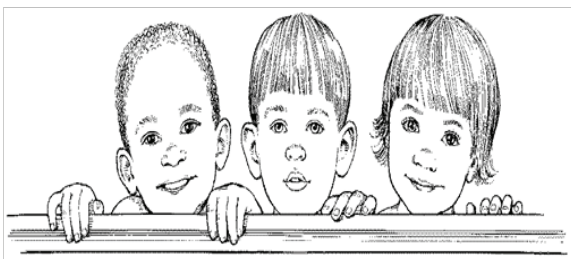
Thank you for calling Child Care Resource and Referral (CCRR) to help you with your child care needs. The referrals and information you receive are a free service. It is CCRR's goal to help you make an informed choice through referrals and consumer education. Our agency strives to better understand the needs of children and families and we are dedicated to keeping all information private. The information collected during the intake is in no way tracked back to the caller.

This guide will help you find quality child care and gives you information that will help you make an informed child care choice. In this packet you will find at least three referrals for child care (assuming options are available) based on the information you gave us over the phone. The provider information given to you by CCRR are only referrals, not recommendations. It is the responsibility of the child's guardian to make the best choice based on their individual needs. Please read the information carefully. If you have any questions, call CCRR at (417)887-3545 or 1-800-743-8497.

Starting Your Search for Child Care

As you begin your search, think about the type of child care you want for your child, including:

- *A reliable and stable arrangement.
- *Caring people who enjoy children.
- *A healthy and safe environment.
- *Interesting and challenging daily activities.



You Also Want to Consider:

Your Child & Group Size—Some children need small quiet groups; others do better in large groups. It is important for children to have consistency, so consider your child's long-term needs.

Your family needs—If you have more than one child, you may want the children together. However, you may have to make separate arrangements to find the best child care for both ages.

Location—Do you want the child care near your home, near work or somewhere in between?

Hours—Think about your drive time to and from work. Do you need the child care provider to be flexible?

Choosing Quality—What to Look For

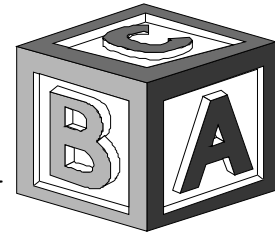
CHECKING OUT YOUR OPTIONS

Quality of child care does affect children. Once you have some possible child care arrangements, make plans to interview the child care provider(s) and visit the facility. It is suggested that you visit the child care facility or home at different times during the day to get a feel for the whole program and day to day operations.

Many families find it helpful to make a checklist before they visit the providers. Your checklist might include some of the points mentioned in this guide, specific needs you have, or even questions you need answers to. After you have made your visits, looked at the programs, asked questions, read materials and talked with providers, you will have lots of information to help you with your decision. Ask yourself if you trust the provider and if you feel comfortable leaving your child there. Below are some factors to consider. This checklist could be used as a guide when you are visiting or interviewing potential providers.

The Provider

- Do the children appear to be happy and involved?
- Does the provider appear to be warm, friendly, calm, and patient?
- Does the provider listen to what the children have to say?
- Does the provider have experience, special training, and references? Are caregivers trained in child development and health and safety and is the Center Director/Owner trained in management?
- Does the caregiver have CPR/First Aid certifications?
- Does the provider have written policies, such as policies for payment, discipline, and attendance?
- Has the provider been screened for child abuse/neglect?
- Does the caregiver plan to be in the field for a while (at least one year)? Staff turnover is an issue many child care programs face. Find out how the program works to reduce staff turnover. Are there incentives for staff, educational/training opportunities, or ways for the caregiver to advance within the program?



The Program

- Are a variety of materials available to help children learn and grow?
- Do activities encourage children to think creatively and learn by doing? Is there a time for children to work in small groups, plus time for them to play alone?
- Is there a schedule posted? Does it show a balance of play time, story time, activity time (indoors and outdoors), and nap time?
- Can parents visit at any time of the day?
- Does the provider have a back-up plan in case of an emergency?
- Are the group sizes small?
- Does the program practice proper cleaning of toys and materials?
- Are there healthy meals and snacks served?
- Do caregivers and children wash and dry their hands before meals and after toileting?
- What is the program's policy on care for ill children?

The Place

- Is there an up-to-date license or certificate posted?
- Are there enough adults for the number of children and age of children in a group?
- Is the facility cheerful, clean, and well-lit?
- Are there enough equipment and materials for all ages of children? Are the toys and equipment in safe repair and are cleaning supplies and hazardous plants out of reach of children?
- Is the space and equipment safe, clean, and in good repair?
- Are there working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers and a first aid kit?
- Is an emergency evacuation plan posted and practiced?
- Is there an emergency plan for each child in case of accident or illness?
- Are there appropriate car seats or safety belts for each child if children are being transported?

Definitions of the Types of Child Care

LICENSED CHILD CARE-

A license means that the child care provider and the facility are monitored for health and safety standards, staff/child ratios, group sizes, equipment, staff qualifications, training, and other items.

Licensing is performed by the Department of Health and Senior Services- Section for Child Care Regulation. Regulation rules are available in every licensed program and a copy of the license should be posted in an obvious location.

All licensing records are open for public review. You may call the Section for child Care Regulation for an appointment to read the file of any licensed home or center. Please refer to the numbers listed at the end of this section.



- Licensed Child Care Center-

A facility operated in a location separate from the provider's living quarters. Staff/child ratios are as follows: Birth-2 years of age: 1 adult to 4 children; Two year olds: 1 adult to 8 children; Ages Three-Four: 1 adult to ten children; Ages Five and Up: 1 adult to every sixteen children.

- Licensed Group Child Care Home-

Any person caring for children in a facility licensed by the state for 11-20 children, not related to the provider. These programs meet the same licensing rules as centers.

- Licensed Family Child Care Home-

Any person caring for children licensed by the state to care for up to 10 children, not related to the provider.

LICENSE EXEMPT CHILD CARE/INSPECTED-

Some programs, including those operated by churches and part-day nursery schools, must meet health and safety requirements, but are exempt from other licensing standards such as staff to child ratios, discipline, and staff training. However, facilities may voluntarily become licensed.

EXEMPT CHILD CARE/ NON-REGULATED-

A facility that receives no inspections from the Department of Health and Senior Services- Section for Child Care Regulation

- Exempt Home Child Care-

Any person caring for four or fewer children, not related to the provider. These providers are eligible for voluntary licensure as of March 1999.

- Exempt Center Child Care-

Some programs may be operated by a school system or operated by a business as a convenience to its customers or its employees for no more than 4 hours per day (i.e. a work out facility offering child care).

Exempt Homes and Centers on CCRR's referral list have completed an application to be listed with CCRR, which includes:

- *A health and safety standards self-certification form.
- *A statement of good health report with tine test for tuberculosis.
- *A fire evacuation plan.
- *A tornado and/or severe weather plan.
- *A child abuse and neglect screening on everyone living in the home or working in the center (as self reported by the program).
- *A criminal background check on everyone living in the home 18 years of age and over or everyone working in the center (as self reported by the program).
- *Two written letters of reference.

Checking Out Your Options After You Have Made Your Choice

All licensed and licensed exempt records are open to the public. You may call the Section for Child Care Regulation office with the Department of Health and Senior Services for an appointment to read a program's file. You can also contact the Regulation office for instructions on the local licensing process. The Section for Child Care Regulation phone numbers in your county are as follows:

Barry, Barton, Cedar, Dade, Jasper, McDonald, Newton, Christian, Douglas, Greene, Lawrence, Ozark, Polk, Stone, St. Clair, Taney, Texas, Vernon, Webster, and Wright Counties: (417) 895-6541

Howell, Oregon, and Shannon Counties: (573) 840-9720

Crawford, Dent, Phelps and Pulaski Counties
(573) 751-2891

Washington County:(314) 877-0210

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- *Prepare your child and yourself for this new experience.
- *Keep working to make it successful.
- *Talking is very important- ask questions.
- *Share information about your child and be available to talk about what's right for them.
- *Set clear written agreements in advance to prevent misunderstandings.
- *Find out what types of family involvement opportunities are available.
- *Inquire about the program's tax ID number or obtain the social security number of the provider for your yearly tax filing.
- *When you visit a program, ask the Director if the program is Licensed or License Exempt. Ask to see the license or the health and safety certificate. If the program is License Exempt you may want to ask more questions about health and safety, staff to child ratios, discipline, and staff training and education.



Concerns or Complaints

CCRR responds to all concerns and complaints received. We will record the concerns and consult with you regarding further action to take, if appropriate. Parent feedback is an important part of the CCRR service. You will be making a contribution to your community if you provide feedback to us about programs you have observed, and if you report information about serious licensing violations or unsafe conditions. Of course CCRR also encouraged you to contact the Child Care Regulation office to report any concerns or complaints you have about a program. Those contact numbers are listed above.

What Does an Inclusive Child Care Program Look Like?

An inclusive program is one that consists of children with and without special needs taking part in the same routines and play activities. Caregivers in inclusive programs learn to recognize each child's strengths and needs. They make creative changes to routines and activities so that each child can be successful. For more information, contact Child Care Resource and Referral and ask to speak with the Inclusion Specialist.

What Does It Mean if the Program is "Accredited"?

Programs that choose to become accredited usually have a strong interest in quality. Accredited programs are not necessarily better than those that have not applied for or received accreditation. However, programs that have applied for and received accreditation have met standards that go beyond licensing rules. NEVER ASSUME THAT A LICENSE OR A REFERRAL MEANS THAT A PROGRAM MEETS THE STANDARDS OF HIGH QUALITY

What If You Can't Find Child Care?

Child Care Resource and Referral strives to provide each caller with at least 3 child care referral options, however, there are times when the location, hours needed, type of care needed, etc. do not make this possible. Sometimes finding a program with openings for the age(s) of your child(ren) is a challenge. Below are some options if you find this to be true:

- Ask friends, neighbors, or family if they know someone or if they can help in a pinch.
- Consult your local Parent's Day Out Programs. Often times your local school district or churches will know the contacts for these types of programs in the community.
- Check with local churches with volunteer services available. They may know of someone looking for a job or who provides care already.
- Contact the work placement departments at local colleges and universities. Look specifically in the departments of education, early childhood, or child development.
- Check with local parent support groups.



**Because these are alternative types of care, CCRR encourages you to check these options out thoroughly. Ask for references, visit the care site, and consider background checks from the Family Care Safety Registry or Missouri State Highway Patrol (see page 6 for details).*

Helpful Resources

Family Support Division:

To find out if you are eligible for Child Care Subsidy call:

Barry County	(417) 847-4761
Barton County	(417) 682-3531
Cedar County	(417) 276-5113
Christian County	(417) 581-7511
Crawford County	(573) 775-2146
Dade County	(417) 637-5326
Dent County	(573) 729-4137
Douglas County	(417) 683-4817
Greene County	(417) 895-6000
Howell County	(417) 256-7121
Jasper County	(417) 629-3050
Lawrence County	(417) 678-4138
McDonald County	(417) 845-6951
Newton County	(417) 451-3125
Oregon County	(417) 778-7251
Ozark County	(417) 679-4616
Phelps County	(573) 368-2340
Polk County	(417) 326-6241
Pulaski County	(573) 774-6121
Shannon County	(573) 226-3295
St. Clair County	(417) 646-8165
Stone County	(417) 357-6118
Taney County	(417) 339-0063
Texas County	(417) 967-4551
Vernon County	(417) 667-3394
Washington County	(573) 438-2121
Webster County	(417) 859-2208
Wright County	(417) 926-4142

Parent Central

Parent Central is the online place for resource and information about issues affecting children and families. Get connected and became part of a growing network of concerned parents. With Parent Central, you will:

- *Receive the free monthly e-newsletter, the Parent Central Express
- *Stay informed about news and resource in the community from Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- *Be part of a growing network of parents who care about children in this county.

Sign up today at www.mocccrn.org

Family Care Safety Registry

Missouri's Family Care Safety Registry was established to protect children and provide background information on potential caregivers. Background screening information about a caregiver includes, state criminal background check (specific Missouri criminal convictions only), child/abuse and neglect records, and sexual offender information. All workers in licensed facilities are screened as part of their licensing requirements. To request information on a registrant's background or to request a screening form, call toll-free 866-422-6872 Monday-Friday 7a.m.-6p.m. You will need the worker's Social Security number to request background screening information and date of birth. For more information about the registry, visit www.dhss.mo.gov/FCSR Screening forms are also available online.

Missouri State Highway Patrol

To find view information about the statutes regarding sexual offenders in Missouri or to view the sexual offenders list for your county or the county of your child care program, visit the Missouri State Highway Patrol website at <http://www.mshp.dps.missouri.gov> or call 1-888-SOR-MSHP (767-6747).

Parents as Teachers (PAT)

PAT is a voluntary and free program that provides practical, effective help for all families with children birth to age three. It offers personal visits, group meetings, and screenings. PAT is available in every school district in Missouri. For more information contact your local school district.

Parent Network

Parent Network is a free online network that brings parents **together** with others who share their concern about access to safe, affordable and nurturing child care. Members include parents, grandparents, child advocates and champions - anyone and everyone who cares about children and the quality of care they receive. Joining the network is easy **and free**, and **there** is never any obligation. To find out more or to join, visit www.ccaparentnetwork.org.

Health and Subsidy Programs

Leaving welfare for work isn't as scary as it seems

Did you know you could work fulltime and still receive some benefits?

The Answer Is Yes!

What are the benefits for families who leave welfare for work?

- Mo HealthNet for Kids (doctor visits, medicine, hospital care and checkups)
- More take home pay (Earned Income Credit money)
- Child Care Assistance Food Assistance

Health Coverage

Families who get off welfare because of work may still get family health coverage for parents and children. It's called Transitional Medical Assistance. After one year, depending on family income, health coverage may continue through Mo HealthNet

Mo HealthNet for Kids (formally MC+ for Families)

Who may qualify for Mo HealthNet for Kids?

- Children through age 18
- Children do not have to be on welfare
- Children may qualify even if both parents live in the home.
- One or both parents can work full time.
- Children may qualify even if their family has a car, a house and a savings account.
- A low-income family with private health insurance may still qualify for their children for higher incomes, children must be uninsured

Some low-income parents, including working parents, may be eligible.

For children to be eligible your family must be below the amount indicated based on family size. Larger family sizes may qualify too.

	Maximum MONTHLY Family Income			
FAMILY SIZE <small>(FAMILY SIZE INCLUDES PARENTS)</small>	2	3	4	5
INCOME <small>(Subject to change annually)</small>	\$3,500	\$4,400	\$5,300	\$6,200

Some families may be required to pay co-payments and premiums

Call 1-888-275-5908 for Mo HealthNet information or visit www.dss.mo.gov/mhk

Additional Assistance Programs

Earned Income Credit

Low-income families (with children) who work part time or full time can get more take home pay through the Earned Income Credit (**EIC**). The amount of extra money depends on income and family size. A family does not have to owe any taxes to get the EIC.

There are two ways a family can get the EIC money.

They can get all the EIC money when they file their tax return.

They can get part of the extra EIC money in advance with each paycheck and rest when they file their tax return

To get the extra money in advance with each paycheck, the employee must file Form W-5 with their employer. Employees can get Form W-5 from their employer or caseworker.

Tax Year 2007 Earned income and adjusted gross income (AGI) must each be less than:

- 37,783 (39,783 married filing jointly) with two or more qualifying children;
- 33,241 (35,241 married filing jointly) with one qualifying child;
- 12,590 (14,590 married filing jointly) with no qualifying children

To get the EIC a family must file a federal tax return. Free help is available to file tax returns. Call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 and ask where you can get help.

There is more good news! The EIC money is not counted as income when applying for MO Health Net, cash assistance, food assistance, SSI or housing assistance.

Child Care Assistance

Parents who get off welfare because of work may get some help with child care expenses. The parent must ask for help with child care expenses. The parent may have to pay part of the provider's fee, depending on income. When receiving child care assistance, parents can choose where to take their children for child care.

Food Assistance

Parents who get off welfare after completing a work supplementation program or because of work they found themselves may still receive some assistance through the Food Stamp program.

So you see families don't lose all of their benefits when they leave welfare for work. They may still get: EIC cash Child care Assistance Mo HealthNet Food Assistance

To learn more about leaving welfare for work (including getting child support), call your local Family Support Division. Specific income guidelines or other qualifying factors subject to change.

Health and Subsidy Programs (p.7) & Additional Assistance Programs (p.8) are adapted from DSS publication no longer in print.

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