

# SELECTING QUALITY CHILD CARE

Finding a quality child care setting for your child requires an awareness of best practices and standards that help ensure the safety, growth and education of your child. But where do you start? Here are some tips to help you find the best care for your child!

## TYPES OF CHILD CARE

**Child Care Centers** care for children birth to 12 and often group children by age. Centers are generally operated out of non-residential, commercial buildings. Centers are larger and are led by a director and numerous staff.

**Preschool Programs** are offered for children 3-5 years old. Programs may be offered through schools, faith-based organizations, non-profit organizations and child care centers.

**Family Child Care** providers offer care for small groups of children and the child care program is in the provider's home. This type of care typically has one or two providers and may offer care on weekends and second or third shift.

**School-Age Programs** provide child care for children during before- and after-school hours. They may also offer care during school holidays and summer break.

## QUALITY INDICATORS

One way to find a quality program is to look for quality indicators such as having a state quality rating or a national accreditation. State quality rated child care programs go above the required state standards by meeting higher expectations. The Ohio Step Up To Quality rating system recognizes child care centers and family child care providers for going above licensing requirements.

# TIPS FOR CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROGRAM

## Determine your family's needs.

- Age and needs of your child – any health, development or social considerations
- Location – closeness to home, work, school or other relatives
- Time – days of week and hours care is needed
- Cost – what you can afford/availability of financial assistance
- Transportation – close to public transit, service to or from school

## Search for child care options.

- Call 4C for Children: 800-256-1296 x1330
- Visit the 4C for Children website: [www.4cforchildren.org/families](http://www.4cforchildren.org/families)

## Match a child care option to your needs.

- Typical hours of operation – days open, earliest drop off, latest pick up
- Staff-to-child ratios – group size, number of children per staff/provider
- Desired environment – friendly home, organized classroom, safe outdoor space
- Program offerings – activities that meet a child's needs based on age
- Typical cost and financial assistance – daily, weekly or monthly fees and eligibility for financial assistance

## Check quality indicators.

- Ask about the provider's participation in Ohio's Step Up To Quality rating system.

## Screen programs over the telephone.

- Ask about the provider's background and program practices.
- Ask for and check references and program licensing.
- Schedule a time to meet with programs that seem like a good fit.

## Meet and greet by watching the caregiver or staff with your child.

- Talk about ideas on child rearing and the provider's child care experience.
- Ask questions regarding daily routines, programming and family involvement.
- Use 4C for Children's Child Care Checklist to compare observations and information.

## Decide on the best child care provider for your family!

### 4C can help!

Contact a specialist at  
4C for Children to find a  
child care option that best  
meets your family's needs.

513-758-1330 *Southwest Ohio*  
937-220-9660 x1330 *Miami Valley*

[www.4cforchildren.org/families](http://www.4cforchildren.org/families)



Family and  
Community Services

[4cforchildren.org](http://4cforchildren.org)  
[families@4cforchildren.org](mailto:families@4cforchildren.org)

