

Quality Early Care and Education...

where our future begins



A Parent's Guide To Child Care



The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.

Proudly Serving the Westchester County Community...

for Over 40 Years

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313 Central Park Avenue, Scarsdale, NY 10583

914-761-3456

www.ChildCareWestchester.org



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Contact us for FREE child care referrals and resources!
Search for child care 24/7 at www.ChildCareWestchester.org
Call a trained child care specialist at 914-761-3456, ext 140.
For financial assistance dial ext 122.
Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM
1-800-898-5114

About Us

Mission:

The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. champions healthy development of children, families, and communities by promoting quality early child care and education.

We accomplish this mission by:

- ❖ Linking parents and businesses to child care
- ❖ Implementing quality improvement strategies for child care
- ❖ Advocating for policies and resources that strengthen child care

Our work benefits the economic health and quality of life of our communities.

The Child Care Council of Westchester is the only agency in Westchester to offer coordinated services to all segments of the child care community, including child care providers, families, companies and corporations, government entities, other community-based organizations and the general public.

The Child Care Council's services include the provision of:

- ❖ regularly updated information on child care programs
- ❖ early care and education information, and referrals for families of children and youth
- ❖ training and technical support to potential and existing early care and education professionals and programs serving children birth through school age
- ❖ facilitating connections for working families to health insurance
- ❖ parenting and work-life seminars in the community and in the workplace
- ❖ consultation to help employers address the work-life needs of employees, including child care and elder care
- ❖ advocacy and community planning on behalf of children and working families

All information supplied to the Council is kept confidential.

Referrals to child care programs are not recommendations from the Council. Selecting child care is a subjective decision. Parents should visit several programs to determine which is best for their family and decide for themselves if any fulfill their needs.

Choosing Quality Child Care

Where to Begin...

The Council understands that all families have a variety of needs and interests. We know that no matter what your individual circumstances are, as a parent, you want the best for your child. The type of program that you select should be the one that fits you and your child's individual needs. You know your child's personality best.

Before investigating the vast array of choices, sit back and assess your family's needs and priorities. Think about your own child rearing. Consider what's most important to you when someone else is caring for your child. Careful and thorough preparation will save precious time.

Ask Yourself...

- ❖ How many people in my household have child care responsibility and how can they participate in this decision?
- ❖ What hours and days do I need child care?
- ❖ Will the hours be consistent throughout the year? Do the hours include weekends? Overnight?
- ❖ Which holidays and how many vacation days am I able to spend with my child?
- ❖ Would I prefer child care near my home or close to my office?
- ❖ Does my child need transportation?
- ❖ What are my resources in case of an emergency or illness?
- ❖ Do I need a program that can administer medication to my child?
- ❖ How much can I afford to spend?

Is Your Child...

- ❖ Outgoing? Shy? Independent?
- ❖ Able to function well in a group setting?
- ❖ More comfortable in a small group?
- ❖ Able to adjust to a variety of people?
- ❖ Very active? Creative? What activities does he/she enjoy?
- ❖ Likely to get sick often?
- ❖ In need of any special attention or services?
- ❖ Engaged in any activities that he/she would like to continue such as lessons or sports?

Tip: Your knowledge and understanding of what's best for your family is the most important ingredient to a successful search.

As a Parent...

- ❖ What qualities in a caregiver are most important to you?
- ❖ How important is it that your children are in the same child care setting?
- ❖ How much contact do you want to have with a caregiver?
- ❖ What form of discipline, if any, do you think should be used?
- ❖ How important is the physical setting?
- ❖ What activities would you like to have available to your child?
- ❖ What are your greatest concerns?
- ❖ How long do you expect to need child care?

Child Care Options

Choosing appropriate care for your child may be one of the most difficult decisions you will make as a parent. The child care specialists at the Child Care Council of Westchester can facilitate your decision-making process by providing you with detailed information about a wide variety of options. When it comes to selecting child care, an informed consumer will make a better decision.

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Remember...

- All care provided outside the child's home which involves more than two children for more than three hours a day, must be regulated by the State of New York
- Regulations specify child/staff ratios, facility size, staff qualifications, and health, safety and nutritional requirements.
- Regulations set a basic **minimum** standard required by law, but may not meet your personal expectations or standards associated with high quality care.

Which child care plan is right for your family?

Once you understand the options available, you can begin to determine the right type of child care for your child. A quality child care program will nurture your child's development on many levels.

Child Care can be divided into three categories:

Care in a non-residential setting

Care in a provider's home

Care in your home

Care in Non-residential Settings...

Non-residential settings include child care centers, nursery schools, and school age child care programs. They may be large or small, accommodate a wide variety of ages or just infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or school age children. Children will usually be grouped by age. These programs are formal business institutions, administered by a private corporation, religious institution, school, community center, non-profit organization, or private business. They may operate all year long or just during the school year and may offer part-time, vacation and holiday care.

Child Care Centers

Child Care Centers serve children for more than 3 hours a day and are licensed by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Care may be provided for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age. Some programs may have achieved national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which indicates they met standards that exceed the minimum requirements for state licensing.

Many parents prefer child care centers for older children who might benefit from a more structured environment than is typically found with in-home or family child care. It is also an option if you want your child to be with peers of the same age. Since there is a correlation between the education and experience levels of the director and teaching staff and the quality of child care provided, it is advisable to inquire about the qualifications of center personnel.

To see the state regulations for child care centers
http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/daycare_regs.asp

Child Care Centers may care for:

Ages of Children	Adult-To-Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
6 weeks-18 months	1:4	8
18 months-3 years	1:5	12
3 years	1:7	18
4 years	1:8	21
5 years	1:9	24
5-10 years	1:10	20
10-12 years	1:15	30

School Age Child Care Programs

School Age Child Care Programs serve school age children (children 5 to 12 years of age) outside regular school hours and are registered by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services. Quality school age care programs provide positive environments and enriching, developmentally and age appropriate activities. Most programs run on a school-year calendar, though some also offer vacation, holiday and summer programs. Some programs may have earned national accreditation through either the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) or the Council on Accreditation (COA), which indicates they met standards that exceed the minimum requirements for state licensing.

Some school age child care programs can care for preschoolers if they have received a waiver approved by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services. To ensure programs are allowed to care for preschoolers, ask to see page 2 of their certificate/registration.

To see the state regulations for school age care
http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/414_SACC_regs.asp

School Age Child Care Programs may care for:

Ages of Children	Adult-To-Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
5-10 years	1:10	20
10-12 years	1:15	30

Nursery School Programs

Nursery Schools usually serve children between two years and nine months to 5 years of age, for less than three hours a day. . A nursery school program can only have children in attendance for less than three hours a day in order to be exempt from child care state licensing/regulations. They often run on a school-year calendar. Some nursery schools voluntarily register with the New York State Education Department; this registration would require the nursery school to have at least two adults available for each group of children at all times. For voluntary nursery school regulations go to <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/nurseryschool/regulations/>

Voluntarily Registered Nursery Schools may care for:

Ages of Children	Adult-To-Child Ratio
3 years	1:8
4 years	1:10
5 years	1:15

Care in a Provider's Home...

Care in a provider's home offers many of the advantages of child care in your own home and is usually less expensive. It is normally run by one or two providers. This arrangement may involve only your child or several others and is most often referred to as *Family Child Care*.

Providers are usually able to accommodate parents with difficult work schedules and often agree to flexible schedules: part-time, weekend, overnight and evening care. They frequently serve meals from breakfast to dinner, and some providers pick up children from school.

This may be the best option for you if your child is more comfortable in a home setting or if you have more than one child and would like them cared for in the same setting.

The flexibility and informality of this arrangement can be an advantage for some families and a challenge for others. So, be clear about specifying the hours and days of service you require. You must also be comfortable with: the number and age of other children in care (mixed age group), other residents/pets in the home, and the adult who will provide back-up service in the event the caregiver is unable to work.

People become family child care providers for many different reasons. It will be important for you to find out why a caregiver has chosen this kind of work and how long they intend to continue it.

Remember...

- In New York State, a provider who cares for three or more unrelated children for more than three hours a day must be registered or licensed.
- The New York State Office of Children and Family Services (NYSOCFS) is responsible for the regulation of child care.
- A regulated family child care home may be accredited, which means it has met the standards set by the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). These standards exceed the requirements of state licensing or registration.

**There are three types of care in a provider's home/home-based care
in Westchester County:**

Family Child Care Providers:

- ❖ Usually one caregiver with 5 to 7 children
- ❖ They are registered by NYSOCFS
- ❖ To see the state regulations for family child care providers go to http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/417_FDC_regs.asp

They may care for:

- children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age
- up to six children if all are over two years of age
- up to five children if any child is under two years of age
- no more than two children under two years of age
- an additional two school age children, kindergarten age and older, if approved (Ask to see their certificate/registration.)

Note: The provider's own children under kindergarten age are included in these numbers.

Group Family Child Care Providers:

- ❖ Usually two caregivers with 10 to 12 children
- ❖ They are licensed by NYSOCFS
- ❖ To see the state regulations for group family child care providers go to http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/childcare/regs/416_GFDC_regs.asp

They may care for:

- children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age
- up to twelve children when all are over two years of age
- up to ten children if any are under two years of age
- one adult for every two children under two years of age
- an additional two school age children, kindergarten age and older, if approved (Ask to see their certificate/license.)

Notes:

1. *A full-time assistant must be present when seven or more children are in care, or more than two children are under two years of age.*
 2. *The provider's own children under kindergarten age are included in these numbers.*
-

Legally Exempt Providers:

A Legally Exempt Provider is one adult caring for no more than 2 unrelated children in his/her home. They are **NOT** regulated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.



Care in Your Home...

This type of care is usually the most flexible and expensive arrangement you can select. It's referred to as in-home child care, nanny, babysitter, au pair or mother's helper. It may be provided by a caregiver who lives in or out of your home. This type of care is **NOT** regulated by the New York State Office of Children and Family Services.

There are many advantages to this type of care. You alone determine hours of work, payment and job responsibilities, as well as meal, playtime and activity schedules. Your sick or disabled children can be cared for in the comfort of their home where the preferences of your children can be easily accommodated.

This may be the best plan for you if you have more than one child, have an erratic work schedule, work late or weekend hours, travel a great deal or commute long distances. However, unless you have a reliable emergency plan, this can be a high risk arrangement.

Also, you're considered an employer and required to fulfill a variety of legal obligations. For information on reporting requirements contact your accountant or the IRS at 1-800-829-1040 www.irs.gov.

Remember...

- There are no child care regulations for this type of care, so you must rely on your own good judgment, supervision, and research on the caregiver's qualifications.
- Care in your home can be isolating for your child unless play dates and other activities are arranged.
- Parents can access an in-home caregiver's New York State criminal history information through Kieran's Law. To request a criminal background check on a potential caregiver, call (518) 485-7675, the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services. For more information on Kieran's Law go to <http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/publications/pub4628.pdf>

Other Child Care Options

All in the Family

Many families choose relatives to provide care for their children. This can be in your home or a relative's home. A family member providing care can offer comfort, love, attention, trust, flexibility and care in a familiar location. However, there can be challenges. Parents should expect the same level of care from a relative as they would from an established child care program. Be sure to discuss and clarify your ideas about discipline, safety, daily routine, and if this is a short-term or long-term agreement.



Summer Day Camps

There are three types of summer programs or day camps for children ranging in ages from 3 to 13 years. General programs or camps offer a wide array of activities and a balance between supervised group activities and independent play time. Specialty camps focus on a particular activity for children with a talent or interest in a specific field. Clinics are short term and concentrate on one activity (e.g., sports, drama, art). Some camps offer a Counselor-in-training (C.I.T.) program, for children 14 to 15 years old, where the camper obtains work experience assisting a counselor in caring for younger campers. Day camps are licensed by the Department of Health.

Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded programs. Head Start programs are for children ages 2.9 to 5 years of age and Early Head Start programs are for children 6 weeks to 3 years of age. They provide 3 hours of a free program and can sometimes offer extended/all day care for a fee. For families who are eligible, the extended day fee could be covered by Child Care Subsidy. Head Start programs focus on promoting school readiness for children in low-income families by providing comprehensive educational, health, nutritional, and social services. Parents play a large role in the programs, both as primary educators of their children and as participants in administering the programs locally. It's open to all families who meet income eligibility requirements so Head Start/Early Head Start commonly serves unemployed parents, low income families, foster children, homeless children, TA recipients, SSI recipients, and children with special needs. A small percentage of families that are over the eligibility income level can also enroll their children.

UPK

Universal Pre Kindergarten programs may be offered by the local school districts to four-year-old children. It provides 2.5 hours of a free program and can sometimes offer extended/all day care for a fee. These programs are voluntary for both school districts and children and are regulated by the New York State Department of Education. School districts may contract with community-based child care centers and nursery schools to offer UPK.

Shared Care

Shared care usually refers to an agreement made between two families to hire one caregiver to care for both of the families' children in one of their homes. Both families share expenses.

If Your Child Has Special Needs

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees children with disabilities the opportunity to participate in all activities of community life, including attending child care. Although child care programs welcome children with disabilities, it doesn't mean that all child care settings will work for you. You need to look for a setting that suits the special needs of your child and a provider with whom you are comfortable. If your child requires medication while in care, you need to use a program that is approved to administer medication. Contact the Council to get a list of programs that are approved to administer medication. For more information on medication and child care see page 22.

How to Make Your Decision...

Now that you've thought about your specific needs and priorities and have had a chance to consider different child care options, you're ready to investigate.

#1 Call. First call and verify that the program/provider is potentially good for your family. Is there an opening for your child? Do the hours and days of operation meet your needs?

#2 Check their history of violations. Before making a decision on a program or provider many parents want to know if the program has a history of violations. It's not uncommon for programs to have an occasional regulatory violation. However, serious or regular, on-going violations are reasons for concern and should be addressed with a program before enrolling your child. You should also regularly check the program/provider license and violation history. Information about a provider's regulatory violation history may be obtained by visiting the OCFS website: go to http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/ccfs_facilitysearch/

#3 Visit. After you have some basic information, make an appointment to visit without your child. You'll want to spend enough time to get to know the caregiver as well as the program itself. Then if you are considering the program/provider, make a second appointment with your child. (Go to pages 20-21 for a child care checklist.)

- ❖ Center Directors will describe the program, answer your questions and let you observe the group your child will join. Be sure to become acquainted with your child's possible primary caregiver.
- ❖ Family Child Care providers may ask to meet you after children have left for the day. If so, be certain to make clear that you will want to return when children are present before making a decision.
- ❖ In-home caregivers will require at least two interviews. The first will give you an opportunity to get to know the individual and the second, a chance to see how the caregiver interacts with your child.

#4 Check references. Ask for references. Speak to at least two parents whose children are currently in care and ask about their satisfaction as well as your specific concerns.

Tip: When speaking to a parent for a reference check, a good question to ask to find out what they do not like about the care is: "Would you change anything about the program?"

Remember...

- Trained Child Care Specialists are available to assist you with making your child care decisions. Call them with your questions or concerns at 914-761-3456 ext 140.
- The referrals provided are not recommendations.
- No one knows your family as well as you do. What's good for one family is not necessarily good for yours.
- Trust yourself! Your good judgment and instincts are most important. If you feel you need more preparation, call the Council.

Making Your Final Decision...

Indicators of Quality Child Care

Not all child care is of the quality that really benefits children. There are indicators that have been proven to affect the quality of care: group size; staff to child ratio; family involvement; caregivers' education; turnover rate; health & safety; and accreditation status. Parents need to consider all these indicators when evaluating the quality of the care. Child Care Aware, www.childcareaware.org, is a program of the National Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) and has provided some thoughts on some of these indicators:

❖ **Adult to child ratio:**

Ask how many children there are for each adult. The fewer the children for each adult, the better for your child. You want your child to get plenty of attention. The younger your child, the more important this is. Babies need an adult to child ratio of no more than 1:4 (one adult for four infants); while four-year-olds can do well with a ratio of 1:10 (one adult for ten children).

❖ **Group size:**

Find out how many children are in the group. The smaller the group, the better. Imagine a group of 25 two-year olds with five adults, compared to a group of 10 with two adults. Both groups have the same adult to child ratio. Which would be calmer and safer? Which would be more like a family?

❖ **Caregiver qualifications:**

Ask about the caregivers' training and education. Caregivers with degrees and/or special training in working with children will be better able to help your child learn. Are the caregivers involved in activities to improve their skills? Do they attend classes and workshops?

❖ **Turnover:**

Check how long caregivers have been at the center or providing care in their homes. It's best if children stay with the same caregiver at least a year. Caregivers who come and go make it hard on your child. Getting used to new caregivers takes time and energy that could be spent on learning new things.

❖ **Accreditation:**

Find out if the child care provider has been accredited by a national organization. Providers that are accredited have met voluntary standards for child care that are higher than most state licensing requirements. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) are the two largest organizations that accredit child care programs.

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Tip: Remember you as a parent are the best judge as to which provider or center will be the most appropriate in meeting your child's needs, as well as your own.

GO TO PAGES 20-21
for a **Child Care Checklist!**

Visit our website,
www.ChildCareWestchester.org,
for specific information on
Infant & Toddler Care

Taking a Closer Look at Quality

❖ **The Child Care Provider/Staff Person**

Does the provider/staff person....

- appear to be warm and friendly?
- seem to enjoy his or her job?
- show respect for colleagues?
- display a calm and gentle demeanor?
- get down to the child's level?

What are the provider/staff person's beliefs regarding...

- praise and discipline?
- treating children as individuals?
- allowing children to learn and experience at their own pace?
- sharing diverse family and cultural values?
- toilet training?

Does the provider/staff person.....

- offer individual attention to each child?
- teach children to respect themselves and others?
- share information with parents?
- maintain confidentiality regarding family information?

Other questions you may wish to ask....

- How much experience does the child care provider/staff person have working with young children or with children of your child's age?
- How does the provider or staff person continue their professional training?

❖ **The Program**

Does the program offer...

- a written curriculum?
- daily or weekly activities that will help children learn?
- age-appropriate materials that are accessible to the children?
- quality books that are culturally diverse?
- manipulative toys such as blocks and puzzles?
- creative materials such as crayons, paint, paper, and paste?
- riding toys, climbing structures, pull toys and balls?
- space for running, jumping and quiet time?
- grown-up clothes, household items, and dolls for dramatic play?
- music activities such as singing, dancing, and simple instruments?
- toys that are culturally sensitive?
- opportunities to explore nature?
- time for individual and small-group play?
- a balance between outdoor play and indoor activities?

- field trips to parks, the library and other places of interest?
- nutritious meals and snacks served at appropriate times?
- opportunities for children to help with meal preparation and cleanup?
- opportunities for parents to observe and participate?
- links to other community resources?

❖ **Health and Safety**

There are some general health and safety components that you should look for:

- staff who are state certified to administer medication
- clean and comfortable play areas
- well-maintained equipment, toys and games
- a hazard-free outdoor play area
- adequate heat, light, and ventilation
- clean bathroom facilities
- proper storage of toxic materials and medications
- a detailed plan for emergencies
- emergency numbers by the telephone
- at least one staff member trained in First Aid and CPR
- working smoke detectors installed in appropriate locations
- alternate exits that are remote from each other
- safety caps on electrical outlets
- a sanitary diaper changing station
- a hand-washing policy for food handling and diaper changing
- one cot/crib per child for nap time
- procedures/facilities for handling a sick child
- proper storage for each child's belongings
- a current registration certificate or license
- proper child/staff ratio so children are well supervised at all times
- infants sleeping on their backs

❖ **Registration**

When enrolling your child in a program, ask.....

- if unannounced visits by parents are encouraged?
- is the program accredited?
- is there a written contract?
- what fees are you expected to pay, and when are they due?
- what are the provider's or center's scheduled hours and holidays?
- how emergencies and parent notification are handled?
- if transportation vehicles have appropriate car restraints?
- how special dietary needs are accommodated?
- will they supply their tax ID number? (Be sure to have this information when care begins.)

Also ask if there are policies regarding.....

- overtime and late fees?
- payment when your child is absent due to illness, vacation or holidays?

- discipline, toilet training and toileting accidents?
- substitute providers/staff members when necessary?

Be prepared to provide.....

- your full name, address and day/evening telephone numbers
 - two emergency contacts in case you cannot be reached
 - the names of any persons who have permission to pick up your child
 - specific information regarding your child, such as food preferences, habits, allergies and medical needs
 - written permission to provide emergency medical treatment for your child
 - a copy of your child's current medical record with up-to-date immunizations
-

Danger Signals

You should rule out any child care when the provider or center staff:

- do not want you to visit
- do not welcome questions about the program
- do not appear to care about or respond to the children
- sound angry, cross or overwhelmed when dealing with the children
- are verbally abusive or physically rough with the children
- seem inattentive and uninvolved with the children

Additional danger signals include:

- the home or center appears dirty and/or unsafe
 - more than the legally allowed number of children are present
 - excessive use of television, playpens or walkers
 - observing a series of unrelated adults in the setting
-

A few final thoughts....
Be sure to visit more than one
program or provider.

The Number One Thing to
remember when choosing child
care is....

TRUST YOUR INTUITION!

A Child Care Rating System is Coming to New York

New York State is in the beginning stages of developing QUALITYstarsNY, a NYS quality rating and improvement system. It is a voluntary program to rate, improve and communicate levels of quality in all regulated early care and learning programs. Participating child care programs will earn one to five stars based on ratings in four categories: Learning Environment; Family Engagement; Qualifications and Experience; and Leadership and Management. For information on the process and progress of QUALITYstarsNY, go to www.qualitystarsny.org.

Cost of Care / Help Paying For Child Care

Many families need help paying for the high cost of child care. Some families spend half of their income to place their child in a quality child care program. Although fees vary greatly, you should expect to spend anywhere from 10% to 35% of your gross income on child care. Financial assistance is available on several levels. There is the public Child Care Subsidy Program administered by the Westchester County Department of Social Services, the Westchester County Scholarship Program, tax credits, dependent care assistance programs and employer assistance programs. Some child care programs offer private scholarships to enrolled families. Visit our website at www.ChildCareWestchester.org for information and eligibility on the financial assistance available to your family.

Public Child Care Subsidies

Many low income working families are eligible for assistance to pay for child care through the Child Care Subsidy Program. The Council provides Subsidy Support Services to help you understand eligibility, complete an application, understand how the program works and if accepted, recertify.

If you are currently receiving or are applying for child care subsidy through the Westchester County Department of Social Services (DSS), be aware that there are two subsidy eligibility classifications: Low Income and Title XX. There could be some limitations on the type of care you use. See page 23 for more details.

To see if you qualify for public subsidy funds call the Council's Subsidy Support Services at (914) 761-3456 ext. 122.

Tax Credits

Families may also qualify for various tax credits that can help them financially. To see if you qualify try our Benefits Calculator at www.ChildCareWestchester.org under Help Paying for Child Care.

The Average Cost of Care

Each year, the Council updates the information on all the child care providers and programs in our referral database. Many of them supply us with their fees for care. This information is used to compute the average cost of child care.

Average Cost of Care As of 12/31/2009	Full Time Weekly Rate	
	Range	Average
Child Care Centers		
Infants (6 Weeks - 18 Months)	\$250 - \$396	\$309
Toddlers (19 Months - 35 Months)	\$213 - \$362	\$282
Preschoolers (3-5 years old)	\$200 - \$340	\$257
School Age (5-12years old)	\$130 - \$255	\$219
Family/Group Family Child Care Providers		
Infants (6 Weeks - 23 Months)	\$145 - \$468	\$254
Toddlers (24 Months - 35 Months)	\$90 - \$400	\$237
Preschoolers (3-5 years old)	\$90 - \$400	\$228
School Age (5-12years old)	\$95 - \$300	\$215
School Age Programs*		
School Age (5-12years old)	\$15 - \$212	\$100

* These are part time weekly rates, which could include before and after school rates.

Complaints or Concerns About a Child Care Program:

If you have concerns or want to make a complaint about a child care program call the Council and a staff person will take the information. If you think a program is operating without the proper license or registration certificate, this is also the basis for making a complaint.

To make a complaint call the Council at: (914) 761-3456 and press "0" to be connected to the operator. You will be transferred to someone who can speak to you directly.

Even after your child has started the program a problem may exist if your child suddenly seems unhappy, is not eating or sleeping well, or loses enthusiasm for playing with you, other children or his/her toys. To ensure that your child is receiving the level of care you want, make unannounced visits.

The New York State Office of Children and Family Services maintains a state-wide toll-free line at 1-800-732-5207 for complaints of possible regulatory violations in a child care program. If the complaint involves imminent danger, child abuse, or neglect, call 1-800-342-3720.

Other Services The Council Offers:

Health Insurance

The Council provides one-on-one assistance to families who may be eligible for free or low-cost health insurance. Medicaid and Child Health Plus is a health insurance plan for uninsured children under 19 years of age regardless of income or immigration status. Family Health Plus is a health insurance plan for uninsured, low-income adults between the ages of 19 and 64 who are not eligible for Medicaid and have no other health insurance. **Call us at (914) 761-3456, ext. 136 for more information.** This is a project of the Westchester County Department of Health funded by the New York State Department of Health.

Starting a Child Care Business

The Council can help you get started! To discuss a career in family child care or to open a child care center or school age program, **please visit our website at www.ChildCareWestchester.org or call the Council at 914-761-3456.**



Employer Services

In an effort to retain valuable employees, companies need to create family-friendly work environments and benefits. The Council can assist companies with establishing a work-life balance by providing enhanced child care referrals, on-site seminars, and assist with on-site and near-site child care center start up. To customize a program based on a company's needs, **call (914) 761-3456, ext. 139.**

Resources:

For additional community or family resources visit our website at www.ChildCareWestchester.org

- o visit our **Parent Connections** section for recent parent e-newsletters, parent group and training information, and local resources.

**Contact us for FREE child care referrals and resources!
Search for child care 24/7 at www.ChildCareWestchester.org
Call a trained child care specialist at 914-761-3456, ext 140.
For financial assistance dial ext 122.
Monday – Friday
9AM – 5PM**

Is This the Right Place for My Child?*

Place a check in the box if the program meets your expectations		
Will my child be supervised?		Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are children watched at all times, including when they are sleeping?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are adults warm and welcoming? Do they pay individual attention to each child?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are positive guidance techniques used? * Adults should never yell, spank, or use other negative punishments. **	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the caregiver/teacher-to-child ratios appropriate and do they follow the recommended guidelines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ One caregiver per 3 or 4 infants ▶ One caregiver per 3 or 4 young toddlers ▶ One caregiver per 4 to 6 older toddlers ▶ One caregiver per 6 to 9 preschoolers 	
Have the adults been trained to care for children?		Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	If a center, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Does the director have a degree and some experience in caring for children? ▶ Do the teachers have a credential or associate's degree and experience in caring for children? If a family child care home, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Has the provider had specific training on children's development and experience caring for children? 	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there always someone present who has current CPR and first aid training?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the adults continuing to receive training on caring for children?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have the adults been trained on child abuse prevention and how to report suspected cases?	
Will my child be able to grow and learn?		Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	For older children, are there specific areas for different kinds of play (books, blocks, puzzles, art, etc.)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	For infants and toddlers, are there toys that "do something" when the child plays with them?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the play space organized and are materials easy-to-use? Are some materials available at all times?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there daily or weekly activity plans available? Have the adults planned experiences for the children to enjoy? Will the activities help children learn?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the adults talk with the children throughout the day? Do they engage them in conversations? Ask questions when appropriate?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the adults read to children at least twice a day or encourage them to read, if they can read?	
Is this a safe and healthy place for my child?		Notes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there clear policies and procedures for infection control (hand washing, diaper changing, sanitation schedule of toys and equipment, and use of gloves)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do adults and children wash their hands (after using the bathroom, changing diapers, eating, etc.)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are diaper changing surfaces cleaned and disinfected after each use?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do all of the children enrolled have the required immunizations?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are medicines labeled and out of children's reach?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the program approved to administer medication? ** Are adults trained to give medicines and keep records of medications? *	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are cleaning supplies and other poisonous materials locked up, out of children's reach?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a plan to follow if a child is injured, sick or lost?	

	Are first aid kits readily available?																									
	Is there a plan for responding to disasters (fire, flood, etc.)?																									
	<p>Is the outdoor play area a safe place for children to play?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Is it checked each morning for hazards before children use it? ▶ Is the equipment the right size and type for the age of the children who use it? ▶ In center-based programs, is the playground area surrounded by a fence at least 4 feet tall? ▶ Is the equipment placed on mulch, sand, or rubber matting? ▶ Is the equipment in good condition? 																									
	<p>Is the program/provider within NYS Regulated ratios and maximum group size?*</p> <p>If a center,</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>Age Group</th> <th>Child/Adult ratio</th> <th>Maximum Group Size</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>▶ 6 weeks-18 months</td> <td>4:1</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ 18 months to 3 years</td> <td>5:1</td> <td>12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ 3 years</td> <td>7:1</td> <td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ 4 years</td> <td>8:1</td> <td>21</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ 5years</td> <td>9:1</td> <td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ 6-9 years</td> <td>10:1</td> <td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>▶ 10-12 years</td> <td>15:1</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If a family child care home,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Registered Providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Up to 6 children, if all over 2 years old ▪ Up to 5 children, if any child is under 2 years old ▪ No more than 2 children under 2 years old ▪ An additional 2 school age children ▶ Group/Licensed Providers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Up to 12 children, if all over 2 years ▪ Up to 10 children, if all over 2 years old, if any child is under 2 years old ▪ 2 adults for every child under 2 years old ▪ An additional 2 school age children 	Age Group	Child/Adult ratio	Maximum Group Size	▶ 6 weeks-18 months	4:1	8	▶ 18 months to 3 years	5:1	12	▶ 3 years	7:1	18	▶ 4 years	8:1	21	▶ 5years	9:1	24	▶ 6-9 years	10:1	20	▶ 10-12 years	15:1	30	
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Is the program well-managed?		Notes																								
	Does the program have the highest level of licensing offered by the state?																									
	Are there written personnel policies and job descriptions?																									
	Are parents and staff asked to evaluate the program?																									
	Are staff evaluated each year; do providers do a self-assessment?																									
	Is there a written annual training plan for staff professional development?																									
	Is the program evaluated each year by someone outside the program?																									
	Is the program accredited by a national organization?																									
Does the program work with parents?		Notes																								
	Will I be welcome any time my child is in care?																									
	Is parents' feedback sought and used in making program improvements?																									
	Will I be given a copy of the program's policies?																									
	Are annual conferences held with parents?																									

* NACCRRRA's, *Is This the Right Place for My child? 38 Research-Based Indicators of High-Quality Child-Care*, www.naccrrra.org.

** Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. www.ChildCareWestchester.org

*** These are the adult-to-child ratios and group sizes recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Ratios are lowered when there are one or more children who may need additional help to fully participate in a program due to a disability, or other factors.

Attention Parents: Medication and Child Care

Will your child need medication during his or her time in child care? Tylenol? Motrin? Antibiotics?

All regulated child care centers, family child care homes and school age programs **must be approved** in order to administer medication to children in their care.

In choosing a program for your child please ask yourself:

- Do you want your child to be able to receive medication like Tylenol when they develop a fever while in care?
- Does your child occasionally require an antibiotic that might need to be given while in care?
- Does your child have allergies that might require the use of an epi-pen while in care?
- Does your child have asthma that might require use of an inhaler while in care?
- Does your child take medication on an on-going basis that would need to be given while in care?

If the answer to any of these questions is **YES**, you'll need to find a child care program that is approved to administer medication. Not all programs or providers are approved to administer medications. Ask to see the program's registration or license. This will indicate if they are allowed to administer medications.

What should parents do?

Ask your current or potential provider if they are approved to administer medication. If the answer is no and your child may require medicine during his/her time in care, this program may not be right for you.

However, there are other ways to work with a program that is not approved to administer medication. You or a family member can go to the child care program to administer the medication to your child or your pediatrician may be able to adjust the medication so that it can be given before and/or after care.

Please note that there are circumstances where compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act may require a child care provider to become approved to administer medications to care for a child with a disability. This would include children with Asthma that may require an inhaler or nebulizer and children with allergies that may require an epi-pen.

**For information on which programs can administering medication call the
Child Care Council of Westchester 914-761-3456 ext. 140
Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm
www.ChildCareWestchester.org**

Child Care Subsidy Resource Sheet

If you are receiving or applying for child care subsidy through the Westchester County Department of Social Services, please be advised that there are two different subsidy eligibility classifications.

Low Income Classification

If you fall below these income levels, you may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. You can use anyone to care for your child, which includes all the referrals received from the Council's Referral Department.

Income Levels for Low Income Child Care Subsidy Effective 6/1/09 - 5/31/10

Family Size	Is Your Household Income Below?
2	\$29,140.00
3	\$36,620.00
4	\$44,100.00
5	\$51,580.00

Title XX Classification

If you fall within the income ranges below, you may be eligible for Title XX Child Care Subsidy. In order to use these funds to help pay for child care, you must enroll your child in a Title XX program. These are programs/providers that have a contract with Westchester County Department of Social Services. They will not pay for your child care if you do not choose a Title XX program.

On the referrals that you received from the Council's Referral Department, Title XX Programs have "County Contract" listed under Financial Assistance.

Income Range for Title XX Child Care Subsidy Program Effective 6/1/09 - 5/31/10

Family Size	Is Your Household Income Below?
2	\$29,140.00 - \$40,067.50
3	\$36,620.00 - \$46,690.50
4	\$44,100.00 - \$49,612.50
5	\$51,580.00 - \$58,027.50

Our Subsidy Coordinator can help you obtain funds to pay for child care through child care subsidy. She provides support with completing an application and understanding if you are eligible. Call her with all your questions about the subsidy system at 914-761-3456 ext 122.