



A Family's Guide to Child Care

BY THE CHILD CARE COUNCIL OF WESTCHESTER, INC.

| 2023 |



Introduction

The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. is a 501c3 not-for-profit organization that champions the healthy development of children, families and our community by promoting quality early care and education.

We accomplish this mission by:

- Serving as a one-stop shop for child care resources, referrals and information for parents and employers
- Helping child care providers implement quality improvement strategies; give the best possible care, grow their businesses, and meet their legal obligations
- Actively advocating for policies and resources that improve the quality, affordability and accessibility of child care

We know that when it comes to child care, you have many different options, and many variables to consider. It can be a bit overwhelming! The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. is here to serve you with a variety of FREE services for families with young children, including children with special needs.

WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU:

- Understand what quality child care is
- Find and evaluate child care programs
- Explore financial resources, like scholarships, public subsidies and tax benefits
- File a complaint about a child care program

4 STEPS TO FINDING CHILD CARE

1. Locate Child Care
2. Know Your Needs
3. Know Your Options
4. Make an Informed Decision

Step 1: Locate Child Care

Contact a trained child care specialist

Call (914) 761-3456, ext. 140

Email referrals@cccwny.org

Online request form

<https://www.childcarewestchester.org/child-care-request>



Step 2: Know Your Needs

Whether you are new to child care or have used it before it's not an easy process. You need to consider your family's needs, is it close enough to your home or work, can you afford it, is your child going to be safe, will your child grow and develop, will they have an opening for your child, the list goes on. The Council can take some the guesswork out of this puzzle.

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU NEED & YOUR PRIORITIES

- Your child's age
- Date you need to start care
 - Start earlier when seeking care for children under 3 years old.
- Earliest drop off time and latest pick up time
 - Consider your travel time, weekend, evening or overnight care, flexible or rotating schedule.
- Location
 - Close to home, close to work, close to other family members.
- Cost
 - Do you qualify for assistance to pay for child care?
- Quality
 - Consider what is most important to you when someone else is caring for your child. [More Info – see page 7](#)
- Transportation
 - Will your child's school transport to child care. Do you need care close to public transportation?
- Medication
 - A child care program needs to be approved to give your child medication; even Tylenol for a fever or teething.
- Setting
 - Do you want it in someone's home or a center setting?
- Your greatest concerns
 - Talk to the caregiver about your concerns before you decide.

Step 3: Know Your Options

There are several different types of child care available to you. The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. recommends that parents select regulated care whenever possible.

CHILD CARE SETTINGS REGULATED BY THE OFFICE OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES (OCFS):

Child Care Centers – Care for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years of age, for more than 3 hours per day in a non-residential setting. Minimum standards must be met for staffing, group size and basic health and safety. [More Info – see page 13](#)

School Age Programs – Care for children 5-12 years old during out-of-school hours, including before/after school and sometimes during school vacations and holidays. This type of care may be found in a freestanding building, a public or private school setting, recreation centers and religious institutions. [More Info – see page 17](#)

Family Child Care – Care for children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age, in a residential setting. Some providers offer part-time, weekend, overnight and evening care options, flexible schedules, and the option to allow siblings to stay together. Typically a mixed-age-group setting. [More Info – see page 14](#)

Group Family Child Care – Group family child care is similar to family child care with more children may be enrolled when an additional caregiver is present. [More Info – see page 14](#)

HIGHER QUALITY

Accreditation by a national organization requires that programs meet a higher standard than state regulation, offering the kind of care, attention, and educational activities that aid a child's growth and development.

QUALITYstarsNY is NYS quality rating & improvement system for child care programs. It assesses the programs' quality and provides support and resources needed to improve their program and better serve children and families. QUALITYstarsNY is a new assessment tool and it does not have enough financial resources to fully support the improvement of quality in individual program. However, for a parent a program who has gone through the process or who is in process is seeking to improve the quality of the care they provide.

For more information, please call (914) 761-3456 x140

*Be careful of possible
illegal child care.
This is care operating
for more than 3 hours
without a
registration/ license
for more than
2 unrelated children.*

CHILD CARE SETTINGS NOT REGULATED BY OCFS:

In-home Care – Any individual who is caring for your child in the child’s home is an in-home provider. There are no child care regulations that the provider needs to follow. In 1998, Kieran’s Law took effect, allowing parents to access New York State criminal history information about potential in-home caregivers. [🔗 Learn more about Kieran's Law.](#)

- **Nanny care** is an individual you hire to care for your child inside your home. They may live with a family or come to the family's home each day. The Ultimate Nanny Guide is what you need to make the best choice for your family. [More Info – see page 20](#)
- If you choose to use a **Family member, Friend, or Neighbors (FFN)** to provide care in your home; the same guidance applies, as if you were hiring a nanny. Be sure to screen, interview and discuss how you want them to care for your child. You should have the same expectations. Note: If you are receiving child care assistance, the person caring for your child in your home must be enrolled as a Legally Exempt Provider. [More Info- see page 21](#)

Family, Friend or Neighbor (FFN)/Informal Care – This care is in the provider’s home. These providers can only watch one to two non-related children in addition to their own. There are no child care regulations that the provider needs to follow. However, you should have the same expectations for the quality of care. Note: If you are receiving child care assistance, the person caring for your child in your home must be enrolled as a Legally Exempt Provider. [More Info – see page 21](#)

Nursery School/Preschool Programs – Nursery schools provide care where children attend for no more than 3 hours per day in a non-residential setting. Typically for children ages 2.9 years old to 5 years old. [More Info – see page 19](#)

CHILD CARE SETTINGS NOT REGULATED BY OCFS (continued):

Universal Pre-K – Universal Pre-Kindergarten programs may be offered by local school districts to eligible four-year-old children, and are regulated by the New York State Department of Education. [More Info – see page 24](#)

Camp/Summer Care – There are three types of summer programs or day camps. General camps/programs offer a wide array of activities and a balance between supervised group activities and independent playtime. Specialty camps focus on a particular activity for children with a talent or interest in a specific field. Some camps are short term and concentrate on one activity (e.g., sports, drama, and art). [More Info – see page 18](#)

OTHER PROGRAMS:

Head Start: Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded programs. 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. [More Info – see page 22](#)

Baby Steps Forward: A full day program for school readiness and social development for children 6 weeks to 3 years. It is a partnership between licensed childcare centers/group family childcare and Early Head Start. Specialists in education, health and development visit the programs to provide extra support. Children receive free diapers and formula while in care. Families receive the support of a family worker. [More Info – see page 23](#)

Step 4: Make an Informed Decision

Now, it's time to decide who will care for your child. Unfortunately, there is no provider rating system to help know which providers are good quality programs. Therefore, it is up to you to make this determination.

CHECK COMPLIANCE HISTORY

- <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/looking/ccfs-search.php>
- It's not unusual to have a few violations. It may not be the right program for you, if they seem serious or make you feel uncomfortable.
- A lot of or repeated violations should be a red flag.

CALL

- Ask if they have an opening for your child during the days and times, you need care.
- Ask what fees you are expected to pay, and when are they due? Ask about payment when your child is absent due to illness, vacation or holidays?
- Ask if they accept child care assistance or accept/offer any scholarships?
- Ask about how they handle discipline, toilet training and toileting accidents?
- Ask if you can come for a visit. It is normal for a family child care home to do the first visit after hours. (Some providers are doing virtual or after hours visits because of COVID).
- Ask if they are approved to administer all medications or just emergency medications.

VISIT

- Spend at least 30 to 45 minutes at the program before making your decision. Remember – being regulated by the state does not ensure that they are a good quality child care program or provider
- 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.
- Quality – see and ask (see Top 20 Quality Indicators)

MAKE YOUR DECISION

- Be sure to visit more than one program or provider.
- Remember when choosing child care is...TRUST YOUR INTUITION!
- 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.
- Paying for child care: See if you are eligible for child care assistance [More Info – see page 9](#)

TOP 20 QUALITY INDICATORS

Parents need to consider all these indicators when evaluating the quality of the care. You should look for these even if using an unregulated provider.

- 1) Program only has a few and non-repetitive violations
- 2) Parents are encouraged to make unannounced visits
- 3) Children are overall happy: there are pleasant sounds (laughter, music), are the adults and children communicating positively, children moving around comfortably, etc.
- 4) Program is approved to administer medication: They are trained to why, where, when and how to administer medication; give the correct dose; and/or know how to administer lifesaving medication to save your child's life? More Info – see [page/link](#)
- 5) Adults get down to the child's level
- 6) Adults appear to be warm and friendly. Adults interact with children in nurturing, respectful and responsive ways.
- 7) Toys and equipment should be clean and in good working order.
- 8) Good books that are culturally diverse
- 9) Frequent handwashing by adults and children, especially during meals and diapering or going to the bathroom.
- 10) Outlets are covered. There are working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.
- 11) What is the program's method of daily communication with parents? How do they share information with parents?
- 12) Do the teachers/caregivers have knowledge and experience in child development and early education?
- 13) Ask to see the program's weekly activity plans and schedule.
- 14) Spaces are clean and inviting and equipment, materials and planned activities stimulate learning



- 15) Adults work with families to support and strengthen household stability and to advance children's development.
- 16) Family members should feel respected, welcomed, and invited to participate in decisions that affect their child.
- 17) A program should have planned activities that are age appropriate as well as free playtime for the children.
- 18) How long have the caregivers been working in the program? A stable staff is an indicator of higher quality.
- 19) Program provides you with a parent agreement that includes parents and programs responsibilities (i.e. payment/refund policy, behavior management plan, and how they report injuries to parents, etc.)
- 20) A higher quality programs may have fewer children per adult.

Warning signs that it's not a good program...

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:

- repetitive and numerous violations
- 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

Paying for Child Care

Child Care is expensive! It is often one of the largest monthly expenses for families. Here are some resources that can help keep the cost down...

CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE

Is to help parents pay for child care who are below the income levels listed below, and working, in college, seeking employment, in a trade school, in school for your GED, or in an employment-training program.

If you are a family of...		Income Level
2		\$54,930
3	who earns up to	\$69,090
4		\$83,250

WESTCHETER WORKS CHILD CARE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Is to help working parents who are above child care assistance but below the following income levels.

If you are a family of...		Income Level
2		\$54,931 - \$73,240
3	Is between	\$69,091 - \$92,120
4		\$83,251 - \$111,000

Contact the Council to apply and receive assistance with these programs...

(914) 761-3456 x140

referrals@cccwny.org

childcarewestchester.org/services/paying-for-care

Tax Credits

Be sure to ask your care giver/child care provider for their tax ID number or social security number before you start care. Keep receipts and records of what you paid for child care. You will need this information when you do your taxes for the Child & Dependent Care Credit.

Flexible Spending Account through your employer

Your employer may offer a Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account for child care. Apply during open enrollment for your benefits. This program allows you to use pre-taxes funds to pay for full- or part-time care in a center, after school care, family child care homes, summer camps, nursery schools, nanny care, etc.

Private Scholarships & Discounts

Ask your child care provider if they offer any scholarships or a sliding fee scale to families to help pay for the care in their program. Many child care providers and family child care providers offer multi child discounts, and will discuss fee options with families.



Children with disabilities, special needs, or medication 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 and your child. You need to look for a setting that suits the needs of your child and a provider with whom you are comfortable. Ask the provider to share their experiences of caring for children with disabilities. 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.

MEDICATION IN CHILD CARE

A child care provider must be **approved by the state** to administer non-emergency medication (i.e. Tylenol, Motrin, antibiotics).

A child care provider must be **authorized by the state** to administer epinephrine auto-injectors, diphenhydramine in combination with the auto-injector, asthma inhalers and nebulizers can be administer to a child with identified health care need.

Epinephrine auto injectors are allowed to be stocked and administer to a child with no known special health care need if they start to display signs and symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction.

When state approved to administer medication or authorized for emergency medication, the provider must have:

- A written Individual Health Care Plan for a child with special health care needs.
- An order from the child's health care provider to administer emergency medication.
- Written permission from the parent to administer the emergency medication.
- Instruction on the use and administration of the medication that has been provided by the child's parent, child's health care provider, or a health care consultant. The parent trains programs who only do emergency medications, as they do not have a Health Care Consultant.



An In-depth look at your Options for Child Care

Centers

Care for children ages 6 weeks to 12 years of age, for more than 3 hours per day in a non-residential setting. Minimum standards must be met for staffing, group size and basic health and safety

SETTING:

- Non-residential building

ADVANTAGES:

- Children are with peers/ are grouped by age
- More structured environment

LIMITATIONS:

- Only 7% care for infants and 17% care for toddlers
- Often have a waitlist for children under 3 years old
- Not flexible with hours
- Some charge more than the required family share fee then is paid by child care assistance.
- Transportation for before/after school care – depends on school district

TIP:

- Start early to look for children under 3 years old.

Child Care Centers

AGES:

6 weeks to 12 years old

REGULATED BY:

Office of Children and Family Services

RATIO:

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
School-age to 9 years	1:10	20
10 – 12 years	1:15	30

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Open 7am/8am

Close 6pm/6:30pm

Full- & part-time care; Prefer children under 3 to be full time.

Only 12 operate after 7pm & one operates overnight.

AVERAGE COST:

Infant \$350 a week

Toddler \$315 a week

Preschooler \$275 a week

School-age \$225 a week or \$11 a hour

*A few offer scholarships.

*Children under 3 years old may need to pay full-time cost, even if attending part-time.

*Most accept child care assistance.

Family Child Care Homes

For children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age, in a residential setting. Some providers offer part-time, weekend, overnight and evening care options, flexible schedules, and the option to allow siblings to stay together. Typically a mixed-age-group setting

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Flexible with hours
- ✚ Offers weekend, evening, overnight care
- ✚ Mixed age group, siblings are together
- ✚ Flexible with rates

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Transportation for before/after school care – depends on school district

TIPS:

- ✚ Request to see registration/license to see maximum capacity.
- ✚ You must also be comfortable with the ages of other children in care, the provider's family members, pets in the home, and the adult who will provide back-up service in the event the caregiver is unable to work.

Group Family Child Care & Family Child Care Providers

AGES:

6 weeks to 12 years old

REGULATED BY:

Office of Children and Family Services

RATIO:

See next page for illustration

1 caregiver for every 2 children under 2 years old; within the maximum number of children

On adult up to 6 children with an additional 2 school-age children.

Two adults up to 12 children with an additional 4 school-age children

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Open 7am, a good amount also open earlier

Close 6pm/6:30pm.

Full- & part-time care

Evenings, overnights, weekends, rotating schedules, before/after school care

SETTING:

In the provider's home or a residential building

AVERAGE COST:

Infant \$290 a week

Toddler \$275 a week

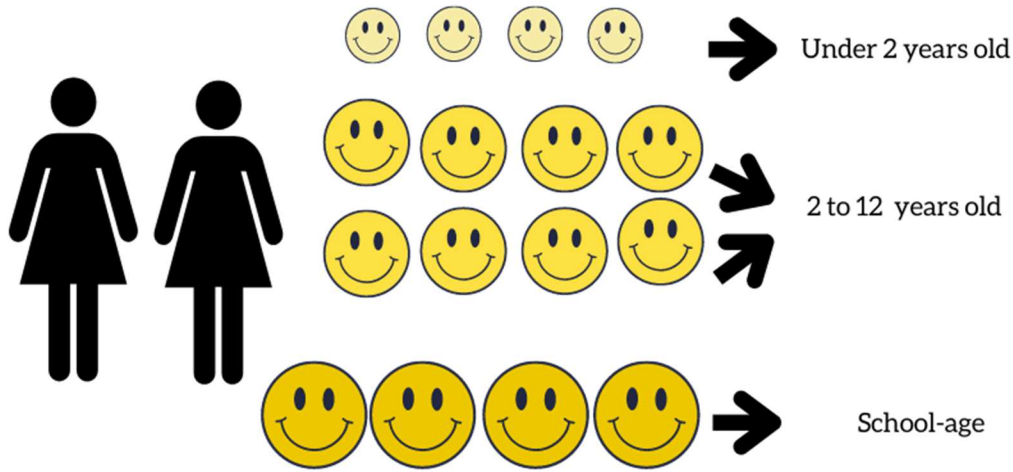
Preschooler \$270 a week

School-age \$225 a week or \$10 an hour

*Flexible with fees

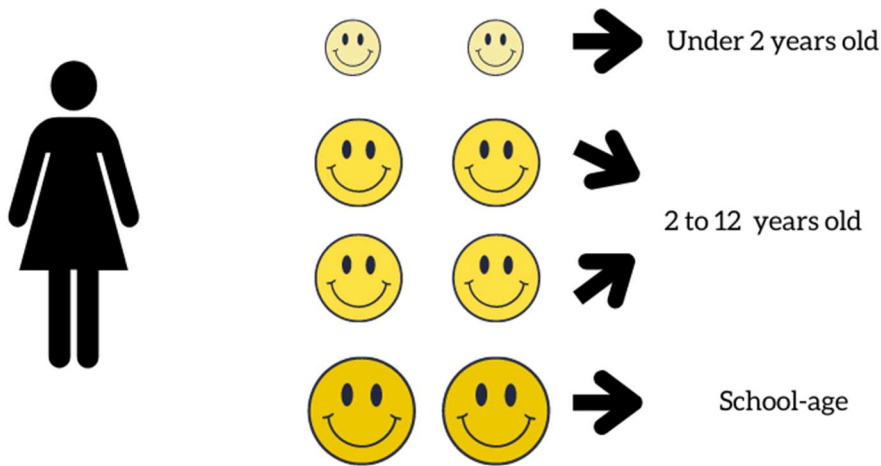
*Most accept child care assistance.

Group Family Child Care



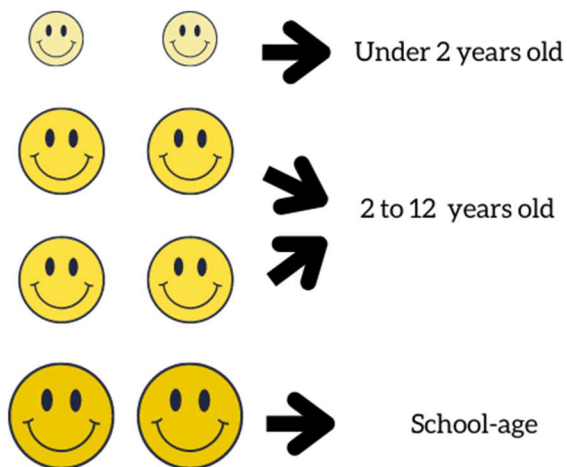
One caregiver per every 2 children under the age of two.

Group Family Child Care Providers may care for up to 12 children AND up to 4 school age children, if approved.



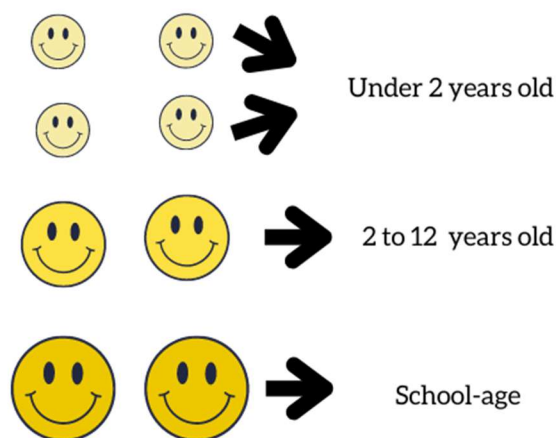
One group family child care provider may care for up to 8 children by his/herself provided that NO MORE than 2 children are under the age of two AND at least 2 are school age.

Family Child Care



One caregiver per every 2 children under the age of two.

Family Child Care Providers may care for up to 6 children *AND* up to 2 school age children, if approved.



Family Child Care Providers may care for more than 2 children under the age of two only if there is at least one caregiver for each 2 children under the age of two.

School-Age Programs

For children 5-12 years old during out-of-school hours, including before/after school and sometimes during school vacations and holidays. This type of care may be found in a freestanding building, a public or private school setting, recreation centers and religious institutions.

ADVANTAGES:

- Most are located in the elementary schools

LIMITATIONS:

- Only a few will operate when schools are closed, especially if located in the school building.
- Transportation to and from school – need to check with your local school district

TIPS:

- Ask if they operate when school is closed during school breaks or holidays or over the summer.

School-Age Child Care Programs

AGES:

Enrolled in Kindergarten or higher grade; sometimes can receive a waiver to accept 4 years olds

REGULATED BY:

Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

RATIO:

Ages of Children	Adult-To-Child Ratio	Maximum Group Size
School-age to 9 years	1:10	20
10 – 12 years	1:15	30

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Closes at 6pm/6:30pm

After school care

Only 20% offer before school care

SETTING:

Non-residential building

AVERAGE COST:

\$11 an hour

Full time weekly around \$300

Summer Care

There are three types of summer programs or day camps. General camps/programs offer a wide array of activities and a balance between supervised group activities and independent playtime. 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, and art).

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Unique summer experience for children

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Hours do not always accommodate working parents' schedules and there is some times limitations with transportation.
- ✚ Most camps will not accept public child care assistance.

TIPS:

- ✚ Start looking and enrolling in camps in March
- ✚ Town camps are less expensive

Camps or Summer Care

AGES:

5 to 13 years old; some service children younger than 5 years old; and 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.

REGULATED BY:

The NYS Department of Health; some also have oversight if they also have an OCFS child care registration or license.

RATIO:

Varies based on activities and age of children.

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Day camps 8am/9am to 4pm/5pm

Sometimes-extended hours for additional cost.

SETTING:

Non-residential outdoor settings

AVERAGE COST:

Range from \$150 to \$3,000 a week

Nursery Schools/Pre-K

Nursery schools provide care where children attend for no more than 3 hours per day in a non-residential setting.

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Socialization for children

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Only operates during school year

TIPS:

- ✚ Enroll your child by age 1 for care when they are 3 years old.

Nursery Schools, Preschools, Pre-K

AGES:

2.9 to 5 years old

REGULATED BY:

None but voluntary Registration with the NYS Department of Education

RATIO:

Voluntarily Registered Nursery Schools

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

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

No more than 3 hours a day

SETTING:

Non-residential building

AVERAGE COST:

\$14,500 annual

Care in Child's Home

Any individual who is caring for your child in the child's home is an in-home provider. In-home child care is usually referred to as having a nanny, au pair or mother's helper who may or may not live in your home with you.

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Flexible schedule
- ✚ You determine pay, job responsibilities
- ✚ Care in the comfort of home
- ✚ Available care when child is sick.

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ No regulatory oversight
- ✚ Unreliable or changes every year
- ✚ Long process to find someone
- ✚ Parents must do own background check:
ocfs.ny.gov/main/publications/Pub4628.pdf or call (518) 485-7675

TIPS:

- ✚ Request our Ultimate Nanny Guide
- ✚ Resource: the International Nanny Association (INA)
www.nanny.org

Nanny Care/In-Home Child Care

AGES:

Any Age

REGULATED BY:

None

However, the parent needs to follow employment laws and tax requirements.

RATIO:

Determined between parent and caregiver.

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Determine by parent and caregiver.

SETTING:

In the child's home.

AVERAGE COST:

Full-time live-out between \$400-\$1,200/ week
Full-time live-in between \$300-\$1,200 / week

Hourly range from minimum wage to \$25.00
Average for New York is \$20.00/ hour

The more education and experience, the higher the salary.

You may need to consider overtime wages, and benefit-related payments, like an annual bonus.

Informal Care / Legally Exempt

Families can choose whomever they want to care for their child. There are only regulations and requirements that need to be followed with care is being paid for by the Department of Social Services.

A Legally Exempt Provider is one adult caring for no more than 2 unrelated children in his/her home.

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Flexible schedule
- ✚ Evening and overnight care is easier

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Often only for a limited time; not long term
- ✚ Not reliable
- ✚ Children watch TV instead of play and learn
- ✚ Parents should expect the same level of care from a relative as they would from an established child care program.

TIPS:

- ✚ Be sure to discuss discipline, safety, daily routine, and if this is a short-term or long-term agreement.
- ✚ DSS will only pay for child care if the parent is approved and provider is enrolled.

Family, Friend, Neighbor (FFN) Informal Care or Legally Exempt Child Care

AGES:

Any age

Under 13 years old if Legally Exempt Care

REGULATED BY:

None

If DSS is paying for care, then enrollment and minor requirements through the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)

RATIO:

In provider's home: two non-related children

In child's home: unlimited

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Determine by parent and caregiver.

SETTING:

In the child's home or in the provider's home.

AVERAGE COST:

Determine between parent and caregiver

Maximum rate paid by Department of Social Services (DSS) for enrolled Legally Exempt Providers

Head Start/ Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are federally funded programs. Head Start programs focus on promoting school readiness for children for eligible 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.

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Extra support to families; some provide diapers, wipes, food, or formula

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Are not available in every town
- ✚ Parent must be eligible

TIPS:

- ✚ Call the Council for available options (914) 761-3456 x140

Head Start and Early Head Start

AGES:

Early Head Start – 6 weeks to 3 years old

Head Start – 3 to 5 years old

ELIGIBILITY:

Unemployed parents

Income Eligible or categorically eligible; unemployed parents, SSI recipients, foster care, homeless, recipient of public assistance (TANF).

REGULATED BY

Some by NYS OCFS child care regulations.

NYS Department of Education

The NYS Department of Health

RATIO:

Follow NYS OCFS regulations

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

They provide 3½ to 6 hours per day for 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 Assistance

SETTING:

Child Care Center and sometimes Family Child Care Home Providers

AVERAGE COST:

Free for head start program

Fees vary for extended care, but could be covered by Child Care Assistance

Baby Steps Forward

A full day program for school readiness and social development for children 6 weeks to 3 years. It is a partnership between licensed child care centers/group family child care and Early Head Start. Specialists in education, health and development push into the programs to provide extra support. Children receive free diapers and formula while in care. Families receive the support of a family worker.

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Extra support to families; some provide diapers, wipes, food, or formula

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Only for Westchester County residents
- ✚ Are not available in every town
- ✚ Parent must be eligible

TIPS:

- ✚ Call the Council for available programs (914) 761-3456 x140

Baby Steps Forward

AGES:

Child Care Centers 6 weeks to 3 years old

Family Child Care Providers 6 weeks to 4 years old; must be enrolled at a BSF program before 3 years

ELIGIBILITY:

Approved for child care financial assistance

Categorically eligible - foster care, homeless, full-time high school student.

REGULATED BY

NYS OCFS child care regulations.

RATIO:

Follow NYS OCFS regulations

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

Full day care for eligible families

SETTING:

Child Care Center and sometimes Family Child Care Home Providers

AVERAGE COST:

Paid for through the child care financial assistance. A family share fee is based on family's income.

Universal Pre-K

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.

ADVANTAGES:

- ✚ Free part time care

LIMITATIONS:

- ✚ Not available in every school district
- ✚ Not always able to accommodate working families schedule

TIPS:

- ✚ Need to register when your child is 3 years old
- ✚ Be sure you are registered with your school district, to receive notifications when it is available.

Universal Pre-K or Pre-K through School District

Ages:

4 years old

REGULATED BY:

NYS Department of Education; run by School District
Additionally if operating in a Child Care Center, follow the NYS OCFS regulations.

RATIO:

Ages of Children	Adult-To-Child Ratio
4 years	1:9

TYPICAL SCHEDULE:

2.5 hours

Extended/all day care is sometimes offered for a fee.

SETTING:

Elementary school
Child Care Center

AVERAGE COST:

Free for 2.5 hours

Fee for all day programs