



# A Parent's Guide To Child Care



**The Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc.**

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[www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://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](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org)**  
**Call a trained child care specialist at 914-761-3456, ext 140.**  
**For financial assistance, dial ext 144.**  
**Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM & Tuesdays 9AM – 7PM**  
**Toll free: 1-844-387-7525**



## 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
- ❖ 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.

The provider names are intended as referral options only and not recommendations. The information about the child care providers on our database is supplied by the providers themselves and has not been verified by the Council. The Council does not recommend any particular provider nor can we guarantee a provider's capabilities or the quality of care. Therefore, inclusion on the database should not be seen as an endorsement of nor recommendation by the Council. Since selecting a provider is a subjective decision, you should visit several providers to determine which is best for your family and decide for yourself if any fulfill your 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, Inc. 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.

**Contact us for FREE child care referrals and resources!**

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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. Such as:
  - child care providers and program staff must go through a state background check that looks for prior convictions in New York State. These programs also have annual visits from licensing workers and must display their certificates in a prominent place.
  - requires all child care providers to have at least one employee who holds a valid certificate in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and first aid on the premise of the child care program during the program’s operating hours
- Regulations set a basic **minimum** standard required by law, but may not meet your personal expectations or standards associated with high quality care.

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**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://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare\\_regulations.asp](http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp)

**Child Care Centers may care for:**

<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b>Adult-To-Child Ratio</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
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 child through 9 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://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare\\_regulations.asp](http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp)

**School Age Child Care Programs may care for:**

<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b>Adult-To-Child Ratio</b>	<b>Maximum Group Size</b>
School-age child through 9 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:

<b>Ages of Children</b>	<b>Adult-To-Child Ratio</b>
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*.

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.

**PARENTS SHOULD REQUEST TO SEE A PROVIDER'S  
REGISTRATION OR LICENSE TO DETERMINE THE PROVIDER'S  
MAXIMUM CAPACITY.**



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

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**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.

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**Family Child Care Providers: (see page 29 for chart)**

- ❖ Usually one caregiver with 6 to 8 children
- ❖ They are registered by NYSOCFS
- ❖ To see the state regulations for family child care providers go to [http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare\\_regulations.asp](http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp)

They may care for:

- children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age
- depending on their certificate up to five or six children, with an additional 2 school age children (kindergarten age and older).
  - Maximum capacity can be 8 children.
- there must be at least one approved caregiver for each 2 children under two years of age.
  - There must be an approved/cleared alternative provider, if there are more than 2 children under 2 years of age.

Notes:

1. *The provider's own children under kindergarten age are included in these numbers.*
2. *If a provider is approved to care for more than two children under two years old, their registration certificate will indicate, "there must be one caregiver for every 2 children under two years in attendance".*
3. *to confirm if a provider has an approved alternate provider call the child care council of Westchester at 914-761-3456 ext 115*

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**Group Family Child Care Providers: (see page 30 for chart)**

- ❖ 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://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare\\_regulations.asp](http://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/daycare_regulations.asp)

They may care for:

- children from 6 weeks to 12 years of age
- depending on their certificate up to ten or twelve children, with an additional 2 or 4 school age children (kindergarten age and older).
  - Maximum capacity can be 16 children.
- one adult for every two children under two years of age



- the provider may care for up to 8 children by his/herself provided that no more than 2 are under the age of two and at least 2 of the children are of school age.

*Notes:*

1. *The provider's own children under kindergarten age are included in these numbers.*
  2. *If a provider is approved to care for the larger group of children, their license certificate will indicate "12 children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years AND 4 additional school-aged children (there must be one caregiver for every 2 children under two years in attendance)".*
-

### **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](http://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>

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### **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, and 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.

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### **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 3½ to 6 hours per day of a free program and can sometimes offer extended/all day care for free or 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.

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### **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.

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### **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.

## Medication and Child Care

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

In choosing a program for your child please ask yourself has your child care program been trained to know the why, where, when and how to administer medication.



Is your child going to get the correct dose of medication?

Will your child care provider know how to administer lifesaving medication to save your child's life?



**All regulated child care centers, family child care homes and school age programs make their own decision regarding whether they will or will not administer medications.**

They must be **approved** to administer medication or **authorized** to administer emergency medications to children in their care.

They can **ONLY** administer medication and emergency medication to a child who has been identified with a special health care need and with proper documentation and permission. They **CANNOT** just administer medication or emergency medication to any child in care.

They **must** follow the regulations related to administering medication and emergency medications:

- Be approved to administer medication.
- 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. Typically, programs who only do emergency medications are trained by the parent, as they do not have a Health Care Consultant.

<b>An Asthmatic Child</b>	<b>Scenario</b>	<b>Program’s Medication Status</b>	<b>Action allowed to be taken; as per regulations</b>	<b>Results</b>
Program has an Individual Health Care Plan for the child, order from doctor, inhaler onsite and written permission from parents	<b>Child begins to have trouble breathing</b>	Approved to administer medication	MAT staff person properly provides inhaler to child	Child’s asthmatic attack is contained and is doing well
Program has written permission from parents		Can only administer “Emergency Medication”	Staff person provides inhaler to child	If staff was properly trained by parent then child’s asthmatic attack is contained and is doing well
Program has verbal permission from parents		<b>NOT</b> approved to administer medication and does not have proper training or permission to administer “emergency medication”	No inhaler can be given and program needs to call 911	Child is being rushed to hospital... outcome unknown  

### **Programs that are approved to administer medications:**

- Are authorized to administer prescription and non-prescription medications; this includes oral medication (Motrin, Tylenol, Benadryl), topical, eye, ear, inhaled medications (asthma inhaler & nebulizers), medicated patches, and epinephrine auto-injector.
- Have individual staff who have participated in and graduated an eight hour skill based Medical Administration Training (MAT) course which helps them to administer medication safely.
  - The MAT Course covers regulations related to administering medication. It provides an overview of medication effects and ways to give medication for both over-the-counter and prescription medication, the handling, storage, permission and instruction requirements, preparation and administration techniques.
  - It also provides information on asthma, nebulizer treatments, food or environmental allergies, anaphylaxis, emergency care, special situations, infection control, and much more.
- Must have and maintain CPR & First Aid Certifications.
- Have a Health Care Consultant who will review and approve the program's Health Care Plan and other documents related to the program's health and infection control regulations, as well as, medication administration policy. The Health Care Consultant will also visit the program to review the program's health care policies and procedures, review of the documentation and practice, and on-going compliance with the Health Care Plan.

### **Programs that only administer "Emergency Medications":**

- Are authorized to **only** administer epinephrine auto-injectors, diphenhydramine in combination with the auto-injector, asthma inhalers and nebulizers to a specific child with specific health care needs.

### **How can you find out if a child care program is approved to administer medication?**

- 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.
- You can ask to see their license / registration – if approved it will be indicated.
- You can call the Child Care Council to find out which programs are approved to administer medications at 914-761-3456 ext. 140



Keep in mind that all programs also must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This means that there may be times when a program must take the necessary steps to become approved to administer medications.

**For information on which programs can administering medication call the  
Child Care Council of Westchester 914-761-3456 ext. 140**

### **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/](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?"

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### ***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](http://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 22-23  
for a **Child Care Checklist!**

Visit our website,  
[www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://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](http://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, private scholarships, tax credits, dependent care assistance programs and employer assistance programs. Some child care programs offer private scholarships, sliding fee scales, or are willing to negotiate their fees. Visit our website at [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://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 25 for more details.

**To see if you qualify for public subsidy funds call the Council's Subsidy Support Services at (914) 761-3456 ext. 144.**

### **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](http://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	Full Time Weekly Rate	
	Range	Average
<b>Child Care Centers</b>		
Infants (6 Weeks - 18 Months)	\$285 - \$430	\$343
Toddlers (19 Months - 35 Months)	\$160 - \$410	\$304
Preschoolers (3-5 years old)	\$150 - \$475	\$282
School Age (5-12years old)	\$240 - \$250	\$247
<i>Hourly Part Time</i> School Age (5-12years old)	\$7 - \$11	\$9
<b>Family/Group Family Child Care Providers</b>		
Infants (6 Weeks - 23 Months)	\$140 - \$585	\$287
Toddlers (24 Months - 35 Months)	\$125 - \$495	\$269
Preschoolers (3-5 years old)	\$100 - \$495	\$260
School Age (5-12years old)	\$85 - \$300	\$213
<i>Hourly Part Time</i> School Age (5-12years old)	\$5 - \$25	\$11
<b>School Age Programs</b>		
<i>Weekly Part Time</i> School Age (5-12years old)*	\$190- \$480	\$375
<i>Hourly Part Time</i> School Age (5-12years old)	\$8 - \$10	\$9

\* 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 maintain 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:

### 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](http://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 **Parent Services or Contact** section on our website at [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org) for recent parent e-newsletters, parent group and training information, and local resources.
- Call 211 Hudson Valley Region United Way helpline. It's a resource that people can call about everything from basic needs like food, clothing and shelter, to volunteer opportunities, legal services, drug treatment, employment support, child care, elder care and more. (If calling from outside the Hudson Valley area/Westchester County call 1-800-899-1479 or 914-997-6700 ext 748)

**Contact us for FREE child care referrals and resources!**  
**Search for child care 24/7 at [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://www.ChildCareWestchester.org)**  
**Call a trained child care specialist at 914-761-3456, ext 140.**  
**For financial assistance, dial ext 144.**  
**Monday – Friday 9AM – 5PM**  
**Tuesday 9AM – 7PM**

*Thanks to the Child Care Council of Nassau, Inc for use of their resources.*



# Is This the Right Place for My Child?\*

Place a check in the box if the program meets your expectations		Notes
<b>Will my child be supervised?</b>		
<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:*** ▶ 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	
<b>Have the adults been trained to care for children?</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>If a center,</b> ▶ 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? <b>If a family child care home,</b> ▶ 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?	
<b>Will my child be able to grow and learn?</b>		
<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?	
<b>Is this a safe and healthy place for my child?</b>		
<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?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are first aid kits readily available?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a plan for responding to disasters (fire, flood, etc.)?	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the outdoor play area a safe place for children to play? ▶ Is it checked each morning for hazards before children use it?	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Is the equipment the right size and type for the age of the children who use it?</li> <li>▶ In center-based programs, is the playground area surrounded by a fence at least 4 feet tall?</li> <li>▶ Is the equipment placed on mulch, sand, or rubber matting?</li> <li>▶ Is the equipment in good condition?</li> </ul>																									
<p>Is the program/provider within NYS Regulated ratios and maximum group size?*</p> <p><b>If a center,</b></p> <table border="1"> <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>▶ School-age through 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><b>If a family child care home,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ <b>Registered Providers: Can care for children 6weeks to 12 years old.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 6 children and up to 2 additional school age children, if approved. One approved caregiver per every 2 children under the age of two!</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ <b>Group/Licensed Providers: Can care for children 6weeks to 12 years old.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Up to 12 children and up to 4 additional school age children, if approved. One approved caregiver per every 2 children under the age of two!</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	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	▶ School-age through 9 years	10:1	20	▶ 10-12 years	15:1	30	
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<b>Is the program well-managed?</b>	<b>Notes</b>																								
<input type="checkbox"/> Does the program have the highest level of licensing offered by the state?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Are there written personnel policies and job descriptions?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Are parents and staff asked to evaluate the program?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Are staff evaluated each year; do providers do a self-assessment?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Is there a written annual training plan for staff professional development?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the program evaluated each year by someone outside the program?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Is the program accredited by a national organization?																									
<b>Does the program work with parents?</b>	<b>Notes</b>																								
<input type="checkbox"/> Will I be welcome any time my child is in care?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Is parents' feedback sought and used in making program improvements?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> Will I be given a copy of the program's policies?																									
<input type="checkbox"/> 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](http://www.naccrrra.org).

\*\* Child Care Council of Westchester, Inc. [www.ChildCareWestchester.org](http://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.



## **Child Care Subsidy Resource Sheet**

### **Low Income Child Care**

If you fall below these income levels, you may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. You can use anyone who is legally able 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 6/1/18 - 5/31/19**

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Is Your Household Income Below?</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$32,920.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$41,560.00</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$50,200.00</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>\$58,840.00</b>

### **Title XX Child Care**

If you fall within the income levels listed below, you typically could be eligible for Title XX Child Care Subsidy. However, these funds are currently not available due to lack of funding.

#### **Income Range for Title XX Child Care Subsidy Program Effective 6/1/18 - 5/31/19**

<b>Family Size</b>	<b>Is Your Household Income Below?</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>\$45,265.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>\$52,989.00</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>\$56,475.00</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>\$66,195.00</b>

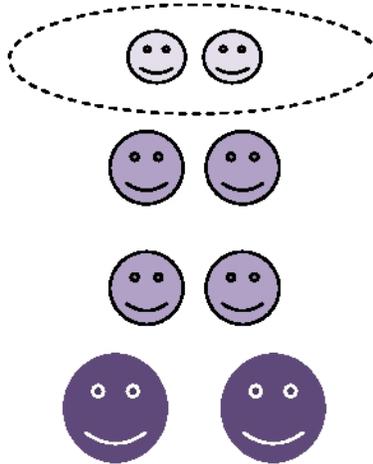
If you require help in determining what category of child care subsidy you may qualify for or assistance in applying, please contact the Subsidy Support Services at (914) 761-3456 ext. 144 or [referrals@cccwny.org](mailto:referrals@cccwny.org). Call with all your questions about the subsidy system.

# Family Child Care



Family child care providers may care for up to 6 children

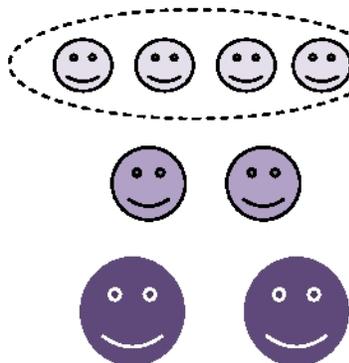
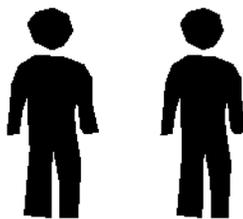
And up to 2 additional school age children, if approved.



One approved caregiver per every 2 children under the age of two!

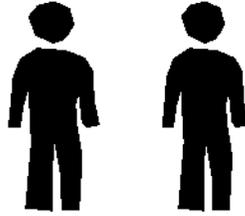
**For a maximum capacity of 8 children**

Family child care providers may care for more than 2 children under the age of two only if:



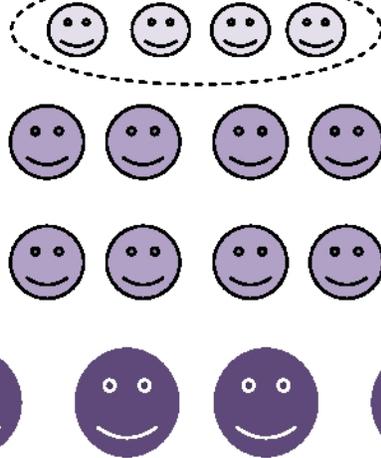
There is at least one approved caregiver for each 2 children under the age of two.

# Group Family Child Care



Group family child care providers may care for up to 12 children

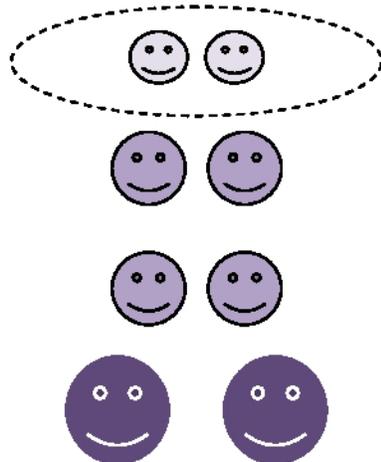
and up to 4 additional school age children, if approved.



One approved caregiver per every 2 children under the age of two!  
(For example, 6 children under two require three approved caregivers)

**For a maximum capacity of 16 children**

One group family child care providers 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 of the children are of school age.