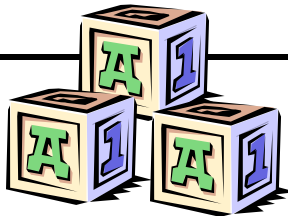




Looking for Child Care?



Answers to parents' questions



Dear Cambridge Parent,

Para recibir una copia de este panfleto en Español por favor llame al (617) 868-2900 extensión 121 ó 120.

Si ou vle resevwa youn kopi dokiman (Looking For Child Care) sa-a, rele nan nimewo: (617) 868-2900 x120

Para receber uma cópia deste panfleto em português, por favor, ligue para: (617) 868-2900 x121.

如需中文，请电 **617-868-2900 转 106**

Finding good and inexpensive child care can take a lot of time. **Cambridge Community Partnerships for Children (CCPC)** and the **Child Care Resource Center** have prepared this information to help make it easier for you to find affordable quality child care and to help you choose a program that meets the needs of your child.

Other Cambridge agencies may be able to help as well. Double click on "For Parents" for their contact information.

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WHO CARES FOR CHILDREN WHEN PARENTS ARE AT WORK?

Early Education and Care: Different words are used to describe the people and programs responsible for the education and care of young children. For convenience, we will refer to this as “child care.”

Parents can make several choices about the type of child care to meet the needs of their children. Listed below are the types of child care available in most communities. The word “caregiver” refers to an individual who cares for and teaches young children.

Center-based Child Care: Child care provided in a group setting. Centers are open all year, often between the hours of 7:00a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Care may be provided to children from 1 month to 14 years. Children are usually grouped in infant, toddler, preschool and school-age rooms. Call the program to see if there is an opening for your child. Infant and toddler care is harder to find and often has a waiting list of up to 8 months.

Infant Child Care: children from 1 month to 15 months of age

Toddler Child Care: children from 15 months to 2 years 9 months

Preschool Child Care: children from 2.9 years to entrance age for kindergarten

School -Age Child Care: children between kindergarten and 14 years.

Family Child Care (FCC): Child care provided in a private home licensed by the state for either 1-6 children with 1 caregiver, or 1-10 children with 2 caregivers.

Family Child Care Systems : A family child care system is a group of licensed family child care homes managed by a sponsoring agency. Systems train, supervise, and offer support to family child care providers.

In-home Care: Care that is provided to children by a relative, neighbor, friend or professional caregiver. In-home care could benefit families for whom transportation is a challenge because the caregiver might come to you. It is important to remember that in-home care is not licensed by the state. You must choose your caregiver very carefully.

CHOOSING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Questions to Ask

Parents should visit several places before choosing the one that may be best for you and your child(ren). You may choose to look in your community or near your work. Call each program and ask some questions over the phone before you decide which ones to visit. Listed below are some sample questions to ask over the phone.

Questions to ask by phone before you decide which programs to visit (you may want to add some questions of your own):

- What age children do you care for? What are the ages of the children that your child will be with?
- What hours are you open? What happens if I am late picking up my child or drop the child off early?
- What is the cost of care?
- Do you offer tuition assistance programs? (subsidies such as vouchers or contracts)
- Is transportation provided? If not, are you near a bus or subway?
- How many children are in your program?
- How many teachers and assistants are in the classroom my child would be in? (ask family child care providers if they work alone or have an assistant)
- What are the qualifications of the teachers/caregivers who will care for my child and how long have they been working in this setting?
- What languages do the teachers/providers speak?
- What will my child need to bring each day? (lunch, snacks, diapers, etc.)
- Is there a place to play outdoors?
- What are the procedures for children who are ill, and for administering medication?
- If your child has special needs you should ask about any special services that will be provided.



What to look for when you visit a program

Here is a list of what to look for when you visit a child care center or family child care home. You may want to take along a friend or relative. When you are visiting, ask for names and phone numbers of other parents whose children have attended so you may ask them about the quality of the care.

The Caregivers or Teachers

- Do they seem friendly and caring?
- How do they interact with children? Do you like what you see?
- Do they respect the children and appreciate their abilities and cultures?
- Does anyone there speak your child's language?
- How do they respond when children seem unhappy? How do they respond when children have disputes?



The Children:

- Do the children seem happy and involved in the activities and with other children?
- Can they choose their own activities?
- Are they able to do both quiet activities and physical activities?
- Do the children all sleep at the same time or can they sleep on their own schedule?
- Do you think your child will be happy in this environment?

Other questions to keep in mind:

- Is the space safe, clean and comfortable, inside and out?
- Is the space organized so children can do different things in groups, pairs or by themselves?
- What games, toys and other equipment are there? Are they in good condition?
- Are there enough adults for the number of children you see?
- Are parents invited to participate in daily activities or are there other opportunities for parents to be involved?

PAYING FOR CHILD CARE

Child care can be expensive but there are tuition assistance programs that are available for those who qualify. The director of a child care center or the family child care provider will help you determine whether you qualify.

There are several tuition assistance programs that are available for families. Each program has different guidelines for who is eligible based on the income of the family and the age of the child.

Income-Eligible Child Care

Families must be working 30 hours a week and earn under 50% of the state's median income. There are a limited number of subsidies available for full time students or parents who are working and in school. Parents pay a fee on a sliding scale based on their income. There are two ways to apply to this program:

1. call the Child Care Resource Center at (617) 547-1063 ext. 72 to place your name on the waiting list for an income-eligible voucher, AND
2. ask the child care center (or family child care system) if they have a state tuition assistance contract. If they do, ask to be put on their waiting list for a contracted income-eligible slot.

Other sources of assistance are listed on the next page.

Community Partnerships for Children

Community Partnerships for Children is for part-time and full-time working families who earn less than 125% of the state median income and have children who are between the ages of two years nine months and entrance age for kindergarten. Additional eligibility categories include disabilities, retired parents, undocumented immigrants, foster care and other legal custody families, families in school or training, and risk factors. Parents pay a fee on a sliding scale based on their income. For more information, please call:

Administrative Assistant
Cambridge Community Partnerships for Children
11 Inman Street
Cambridge MA 02139
(617) 868-2900 ext 106 or 120

Head Start Programs

Head Start is a free program for 3 & 4 year old children from income-eligible families. Some programs run for ten months a year, for four to six hours a day, and others are full day, full year. For more information, please call:

Renee Etienne or Shawna Weekly
Cambridge Head Start
432 Columbia Street
Cambridge, MA 02141
(617) 577-7880

Cambridge Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP)

Working parents of children in kindergarten through 6th grade may apply for assistance from this program for after-school care if they have their child(ren) in a licensed Cambridge after-school program. Families are chosen from a lottery in the middle of July for September enrollment. Call the Child Care Resource Center at (617) 547-1063 ext. 271 to receive an application.

Department of Human Service Programs Tuition Assistance

DHSP offers a limited number of reduced tuition slots for preschool and school-age children who are enrolled in DHSP programs. Eligibility is determined by income and family size; scholarships are awarded on a first come, first serve basis. For more information contact Chandra Green at (617) 349-6254.

The information contained in this pamphlet
was adapted from materials created by the
Child Care Resource Center.

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