

Child Care Fact Sheet and Planner

You Have Many Options in Choosing Child Care!

Regulated Child Care

A regulated child care provider is licensed or registered by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and conforms to health, fire and building codes. Workers must pass medical, character and criminal background **checks**.

Family Child Care: Up to six children (8 in some cases) may be cared for in the provider's home. No more than two children under two years of age – including the provider's own – are allowed.

Group Family Child Care: Two providers caring for up to 12 children (14 in some cases) in the home of one of the providers.

Child Care Centers: Teachers and other trained staff provide child care in a classroom setting.

School Age Child Care: Many family day care providers and day care centers serve children up to age 13. There are also free programs; many are located in schools. Talk to an ACS worker in your job center or call 311 to find a school age program in your area.

ACS Child Care Centers: The Administration for Children's Services Division of Child Care and Head Start contracts with centers and family day care networks to provide regulated child care. Each program has an educational component to promote school readiness. Parents should call 311 for help locating a vacancy in an ACS Child Care Center.

Need help finding child care in your area?

Workers at your Job Center can assist you in locating child care. Other resources include: the Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium (CCRRC) at (888) 469-5999.

For children with special needs, call CCRRC or Resources for Children with Special Needs, Inc. at (212) 677-4650.

Child Development Programs

Head Start is a federally-funded, comprehensive child development program that serves children ages three to five and their families. Head Start offers activities and educational programs to prepare children for school and help them succeed later in life. Talk to an ACS worker in your Job Center or call 311 to locate a Head Start program in your neighborhood.

Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) is a comprehensive Department of Education pre-kindergarten program that provides children with a nurturing environment and educational experiences to promote positive early childhood development. Parents may choose a UPK program in a public school or a community-based program. Talk to an ACS worker in your Job Center or call 311 for more information.

Out-of-School Time (OST) programs for youth offered by the Department of Youth and Community Development provide a mix of academic support, sports and recreational activities, arts and cultural experiences at no cost after school, on weekends and during school vacations. Talk to an ACS worker in your Job Center or call 311 for more information.

Informal/Legally-Exempt Providers

Informal care is often provided by relatives, neighbors and friends. Informal providers may care for no more than two unrelated children under age seven at the same time for three or more hours per day in the provider's home. Parents and informal providers must complete a checklist about the health and safety of the home. Background checks and inspections of the informal provider's home may be required. The City of New York will pay these providers if they are unrelated or related to the children – but not if they are the parents or guardians of the children or on the same public assistance case.

Family Day Care Networks

Networks provide referrals and support to groups of family day care providers. Networks are not regulated and affiliation with a network is not a requirement.

For more information call the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's Family Day Care Registration Office at (212) 280-9251.

There Are Long-Lasting Benefits of Quality Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood Experiences and Brain Development

- ◆ Early experiences from birth to age five affect the development of the brain and lay the foundation for intelligence, social and emotional health.
- ◆ Research tells us that children, even in the earliest months, have an amazing ability to learn.
- ◆ Children who are nurtured and stimulated during the first years of life are more prepared for kindergarten.

Long-Lasting Benefits of Early Childhood Education

- ◆ Enhanced language development.
- ◆ Higher academic achievement in both reading and math.
- ◆ Completion of more years of education.
- ◆ More likely to attend college.

What To Consider When Looking for Child Care and Early Childhood Education Programs

- ◆ **A low child-to-teacher ratio** determines how much attention your child will get and is key to good care. The younger the child, the more individualized attention is needed.
- ◆ **Training in early childhood development** assures that staff understand how children grow and learn so they can be more effective teachers and caregivers.
- ◆ **Relationships** that are warm and sensitive help children develop a positive sense of self and encourage them to respect and cooperate with others.
- ◆ **Curriculum and materials** contribute to the quality of early childhood programs in helping children use their developing language, thinking and motor skills.
- ◆ **A safe and healthy environment.**
- ◆ **Backup and supplemental child care**
Don't forget – make sure to plan backup child care for times when your main child care provider is sick or on vacation and for school breaks and summer vacations. You may need a supplemental provider if you choose a part-day Head Start or UPK program.
- ◆ Are all children under adult supervision at all times?
- ◆ How many other children will be with the child care provider? How many adult staff are with each group?
- ◆ What training does the provider have in child development and early childhood education?
- ◆ How many years of experience in child care does the provider have?
- ◆ Is the provider warm and caring toward children?
- ◆ Does the provider respect each child?
- ◆ What will my child learn from this child care provider?
- ◆ Are there plenty of toys, books and learning materials that offer challenging activities?
- ◆ Does the child care facility look clean?
- ◆ What are the health and safety procedures and policies for handling emergencies?
- ◆ Does the provider have a valid license or certificate?

Important Telephone Numbers

ACS Division of Child Care and Head Start	311
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)	(212) 835-0163
Child Care Automated Phone System (CAPS)	(800) 692-0699
Child Care Resource and Referral Consortium (CCRRC)	(888) 469-5999
Department of Health and Mental Hygiene	311
Early Childhood Professional Development Institute	(646) 344-7355
Children With Special Needs	(212) 677-4650
Transitional Child Care	(212) 835-7681