

Your Guide to Choosing Quality Child Care



**Children's
Service Society**

Care About
Childcare



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Care About Childcare

655 East 4500 South Suite, 200
Salt Lake City, UT 84107

Referral Line: 801-355-4847
Toll Free: 1-866-438-4847

www.CareAboutChildcare.utah.gov



Care About Childcare is a program of Children's Service Society. Funding is provided by the Utah Department of Workforce Service's Office of Work and Family Life/Office of Child Care.

Dear Parent,

Thank you for contacting Care About Childcare. Looking for child care can be one daunting task. Our Referral Specialists can make it easier and even a great experience for you and your child.

One of our most important jobs is to inform you on how to choose quality child care. Our child care Referral Specialists are available to answer your questions during your search and while your child remains in child care.

Because we do not visit the child care providers on our database, we cannot guarantee quality or recommend one provider over another and we accept no responsibility or liability for them.

You are in the best position to observe and select the site that meets you and your child's needs.

Best Wishes,
Care About Childcare

Care About Childcare



Searching for Quality Care

CareAboutChildcare.utah.gov®

The shortest distance between parents and providers.

Care About Childcare (CAC) is designed to serve as a web-based resource to parents looking for child care by matching the families' specific needs to child care providers' specific strengths. We provide free referrals of all regulated child care providers in our area.

Every regulated center and family/home provider will have a profile page on the CAC website. On this page, providers can highlight their program for parents in these six areas:

1) General Information

Covers program info-including contact information, the type of care that is provide & if they have openings, hours of operation, program attributes (like schools that they bus to, or if they take drop-in care) and links to their own Facebook page, blog or website.

2) Department of Health Child Care Licensing Record

Parents often ask about a providers licensing history when they are looking for quality child care. This link displays only substantiated complaint allegations and cited findings for the past two years. It does not include any inspections completed in the last 30 days.

3) Care About Childcare Quality Indicators

One of the main goals of the Quality Indicator program is to assist parents in identifying programs that fit their child's needs. This is a 100% voluntary program for the providers and there is no charge for the parents to use this service.

- It's available only to Licensed Centers and Licensed Family providers. They need to have

been licensed for six months or longer, and be in good standing with Utah's Child Care Licensing program.

- After meeting the eligibility requirements they can choose from approximately 100 different criteria to display on their individual profile page. They are not expected to apply for all of the criteria available. There are many right ways to provide quality child care. Providers are encouraged to apply for the CAC quality criteria that are the right fit for their program and the families that they serve.
- This is free marketing for providers to advertise to the parents who are looking for the quality that they offer. The criteria under the following six Quality Indicators are meant to showcase their program. *Health and Safety, Outdoor Environment, Indoor Environment, The Program, Family Involvement, and Administration.*

4) Professional Development: Research shows the quality of care children receive is directly linked to the level of training and education received by caregivers. As providers complete classes parents will be able to see how they are working to gain knowledge and skills that they will use in caring for your children.

5) Children with Special Needs

Training: This page will let you know if providers have experience, training, or are 'willing to be trained' to care for children with special needs. It will also list if they have taken the CAC special needs endorsement.

6) Provider Message and Photos:

Providers can highlight their program's specialties in a message for prospective families. Parents will easily be able to see program's philosophy, and view the pictures that providers have chosen to highlight their facility.

Steps to Choosing Quality Child Care

Looking for child care is one of the most important things you will do for your child and something that no one can do for you. Give yourself adequate time to search, evaluate programs, and make a decision.

1. Read material on how to choose quality child care (page 5)

2. Call Care About Childcare

Referral Line: 801-355-4847
Toll Free: 1-866-438-4847

3. Conduct a telephone interview (pages 6 - 7)

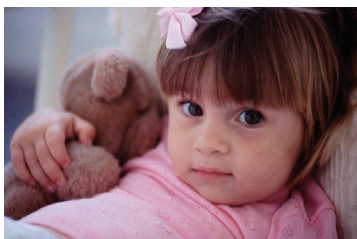
4. Visit at least three providers (pages 8 - 9)

5. Ask for references and contact them (pages 10 - 11)

6. Call the Bureau of Licensing (page 13) Metro Area: 801-273-6617

7. Select care (page 12)

If you can't find care that you are happy with the first time through, start your search again. Quality child care is one of the best investments you can make for your child. Remember: choosing the best of the worst is not a good solution.



What is Quality Child Care?

Quality child care can make a big difference in the future of your child. You can give your child a head start on a strong and healthy mind, body, and spirit. Although quality child care can mean different things to different people, many experts agree that quality care includes the following:

- **Affection and Attention:** Is the provider interested in your child as an individual? Do they talk and listen at the child's level? Do they comfort the children when needed? Are the children the provider's main focus? The provider should be warm, energetic, and caring with the children.
- **Group Size:** Small groups are best.
- **Training of the Provider:** Research has shown that the most important indicator of quality child care is the training in early childhood that the provider has received. Ask what training in child development the person has. How long have they been doing child care?
- **Low Staff Turnover:** It is important to your child to have the same caregiver for as long as possible--ideally a year or more.
- **Parent/Provider Communication:** This is important for a good partnership and the child's positive experience in care. Ask about specific ways the provider will communicate with you.
- **Developmental Growth:** Do the program's child rearing goals and discipline style match your own?
- **Healthy Environment:** Are emergency numbers and policies posted? Sanitary diapering procedures and schedules? Clean and safe places for children to crawl? Is there healthy food and are there separate areas for eating, diapering, resting, and playing?

Telephone Interview Checklist

A good telephone interview can save you time and energy after talking with a provider, set up a time to observe on-site where your child may be spending the day.

Name of Provider	
How many children are you licensed for?	
How many children will be in my child's group?	
How long have you been in business?	
Do you have any training in childhood education?	
What are some of the classes you have taken?	
What is your daily schedule for the children?	
What fees do you charge?	
What meals or snacks do you provide?	
What is your policy for sick children?	
Do you hire a substitute when you are on vacation?	
What holidays are you closed for?	
Why did you decide to become a child care provider?	
Additional questions	

in your search for child care. If you like what you hear
e. Let the provider know you would like to come and see

[illegible]

On-Site Checklist

Providers

- ☐ Does the provider seem to really like children?
- ☐ Does the provider get down on each child's level? (kneeling, eye contact, etc.)
- ☐ Are the children greeted when they arrive?
- ☐ Are children's needs met quickly even when things get busy?
- ☐ Is the provider aware of each child's location at all times? (scanning room, counting heads)
- ☐ Will the provider tell you what your child will be doing every day?
- ☐ Are parents' ideas welcomed and implemented? Are there ways for you to get involved?
- ☐ Does there seem to be more children than the provider can adequately care for?
- ☐ Do the provider and the children seem to enjoy being together?
- ☐ Has the provider met or exceeded required training?
- ☐ Does the provider help children work through their problems using emotional or social coaching?
- ☐ Does the provider give simple, positive directions?

Setting

- ☐ Is the atmosphere bright, pleasant, and clean?
- ☐ Is there a fenced outdoor play area with a variety of safe toys and equipment? Is the playground surface shock absorbent?
- ☐ Can the provider see the entire play area at all times?
- ☐ Do adults supervise outdoor play?
- ☐ Are there individual beds or mattresses to sleep on?
- ☐ Is there access to clean drinking water inside and out?
- ☐ Are there working smoke detectors and a first aid kit?
- ☐ Are hands washed often?
- ☐ Is there a variety of toys? Choice of activities?
- ☐ Do children have a place for their own belongings?

Activities

- ☐ Is there a daily balance of play time, math and science exploration time, story time, activity time, and nap time? Is their play productive and educational?
- ☐ Is there a predictable routine for each day?
- ☐ Are the activities and toys appropriate for each age group?
- ☐ Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children?
- ☐ Are toys clean, safe, and within reach of the children?
- ☐ If a television is used, is it limited to short periods of time?
- ☐ Does the provider read to the children everyday?

In General

- ☐ Do you agree with the discipline practices?
 - ☐ Do you hear the sounds of happy children? Is it too noisy?
 - ☐ Are the meals and snacks nutritious and appealing to the children?
 - ☐ Are children comforted when needed?
 - ☐ How is the program regulated?
 - ☐ Are surprise or drop-in visits by parents encouraged?
 - ☐ Was your first impression of the program good?
 - ☐ Will your child be happy there?
 - ☐ Does this seem to be a healthy and safe environment?
 - ☐ Does the provider have a written contract or agreement so all expectations are clear?
- (Sample contracts are available from Child Care Resource & Referral ~ Metro)



Getting References

While it is not always comfortable or easy to call strangers and ask their personal opinions, it is one of the most important steps to choosing quality care. Here are suggestions to help you get the most out of calling references:

1. Say to the provider “Could you give me the names of some other parents I could call as a reference?” Make it very clear that you want to call parents who have had children in their care. Friends or relatives can vouch for the person’s reputation but can’t tell you much about the actual care.

2. Get names of both current and former users. Former users may be more inclined to talk to you honestly because their child is no longer enrolled there. Current users can give you a better picture of what care is like right now.

3. Ask for at least six or seven names. References are sometimes hard to track down. Ask for more names than you believe you will need. If you are uneasy about the responses you get from the first few you call, it is good to have others to fall back on.

4. Write out questions before you call. Ask specific questions that require more than “yes” or “no” answers. Asking “What do you like best about Mrs. Smith’s service?” will get you more specifics than “Are you happy with Mrs. Smith?”

- *How long has it been since your child was in Mrs. Smith’s care?*
- *How old was your child when he or she started care?*
- *What three things do you like best about the child care program?*
- *What things do you like the least?*
- *What happens when your child gets sick?*
- *What happens when the provider is sick?*



- *What other adults have contact with the children?*
- *How does Mrs. Smith discipline?*
- *How do the children interact with each other?*
- *How does your child feel about child care? Is he or she generally happy to go there?*
- *I am worried about this specific problem my child has (name the problem). Do you think Mrs. Smith can handle it?*
- *Do you have any reservations about recommending the child care program?*
- *Would you select this care for another child of yours?*

Even though the provider gives you the references, don't assume that all you will hear is praise. Even people who love their child care provider may tell you something that will help you decide whether the program will work for you and your child.

Listen to what is said and what's left unsaid. Silence and hesitation can speak volumes. Keep in mind that you may just have different goals and priorities for your children than they do. You are the one who is responsible for choosing the best environment for you and your child's needs.

Calling references can be one of the many tools you use to determine the quality of the program you are considering and how well it will fit your needs.

The First Day

The Parent

- Come to terms with feeling good about being at work while your child is being cared for by someone else.
- Be comfortable with your child care decision.
- You will be more productive if you know your child is safe.
- Good feelings are contagious. Your child will feel good about the arrangements if you do.

The Child

- Take the child to visit the new child care provider.
- Talk on the way about the new child care arrangements.
- Bring a familiar object like a teddy bear or a picture of your family to help him or her feel comfortable.
- Stay with your child the first day until your child is comfortable
- NEVER leave without saying goodbye.
- Always say goodbye with a kiss, a hug, and a wave.
- Tell your child when you will be back and follow through.
- Be firm yet friendly about leaving.



Community Resources

Child About Childcare

Free child care referrals and resources.

801-355-4847 or 1-866-438-4847

www.CareAboutChildcare.utah.gov

Children's Service Society

Grandfamilies Relatives as Parents, Home Visitation, Welcome Baby, and Adoption.

801-355-7444 or 1-800-839-7444

www.cssutah.org

Utah State Bureau of Child Care Licensing

Provides complaint history of child care providers.

801-273-6617 or 1-888-287-3704

Child Protective Services

To report suspected child abuse.

801-281-5151

The Information and Referral Center

Connects the community to human service agencies, governmental offices, and professional organizations throughout Utah.

2-1-1 or 1-888-826-9790

www.informationandreferral.org

Family Support Center

Immediate, short-term (up to 72 hours) free care for children under 12 in a crisis situation.

Midvale: 801-255-6881

Sugarhouse: 801-487-7778

Taylorsville: 801-955-9110

West Valley: 801-967-4259

C.A.P. Head Start

Pre-school program for low income families.

801-977-1122

WIC (Women, Infants, and Children)

Provides vouchers for nutritious food for infants, children up to 5 years old, and nursing women.

801-538-6960 or 1-877-942-5437

CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program)

Provides low cost health insurance for children.

1-877-543-7669

<http://health.utah.gov/chip>

Community Resources Cont.

Department of Workforce Services

Can provide financial assistance to help pay for child care based on income qualifications.

Toll Free 1-866-435-7414

www.jobs.utah.gov



Utah Care About Childcare Agencies

Bridgerland: 1-800-670-1552

www.usuchild.usu.edu

(Box Elder, Cache, and Rich Counties)

Northern: 1-888-970-0101

<http://programs.weber.edu/ccrr/>

(Weber, Morgan, and Davis Counties)

Metro: 1-866-438-4847

www.cssutah.org/childcare

(Salt Lake and Tooele Counties)

Mountainland: 1-800-952-8220

www.uvu.edu/ccrr/

(Utah, Wasatch, and Summit Counties)

Western: 1-888-344-4896

www.childcarehelp.org

(Juab, Piute, Wayne, Millard, Sanpete, Sevier, Iron, Washington, Kane, Garfield, and Beaver Counties)

Eastern: 1-888-637-4786

www.ceu.edu/childcare

(Daggett, Duchesne, Uintah, Carbon, Emery, Grand, and San Juan Counties)

Child Care Referrals Outside Of Utah

Child Care Aware: 1-800-424-2246

www.childcareaware.org

Community Resources Cont.

Nanny Services

Helper's West

801-546-3888

www.helperswest.com

GONAI-GOAUPAIR

801-255-7722 or 1-888-287-2471

www.goaupair.com

Heartland Caregivers

1-800-866-6266

www.heartlandcaregivers.com

All About Nannies - Family Connection

www.allaboutnannies.net



National Child Care Associations

NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)

1-800-424-2460

www.naeyc.org

NAFCC (National Association of Family Child Care)

1-800-359-3817

www.nafcc.org

NCCA (National Child Care Association)

1-800-543-7161

www.nccanet.org

Websites With Information About Child Care

National Child Care Information Center

<http://nccic.org>

National Network for Child Care

www.nncc.org

Child Care Aware

www.childcareaware.org

13 Indicators of Quality Child Care

<http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/ccquality-ind02/>

Websites That Provide Parenting And Children's Health Information

Parent's Place

www.parentspace.com

Kid's Health

<http://kidshealth.org>

Dr. Becky Bailey

www.bbailey.com

United States Dept of Agriculture

www.usda.gov/cnpp

Local Child Care Associations

UAEYC (Utah Assoc. for the Education of Young Children)

www.uaeyc.org

PFCCA (Professional Family Child Care Association)

1-800-430-6026

www.pfcca.org



**Children's
Service Society**

Care About
Childcare 

**Helping Parents Find
Quality Child Care with
Free Referrals**

**Training and Supporting
Child Care Providers**

**Linking Child Care
and Education**

**Promoting Business
Involvement in Quality
Child Care**

**Promoting Quality
Environments and
Experiences for All Children**

**Documenting Child Care
Needs and Trends**

Engaging New Partners

Resource Lending Library



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