A Guide to
Your Child Care Options

Transition Tips
Back-Up Care
Parent & Provider Communication
for Child’s Needs
SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD CARE
ADAPTING TO THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS
Welcome to A Guide to Your Child Care Options, a resource provided by the ACFC to help make your search for child care as stress-free as possible.

We understand that the selection of a child care arrangement is one of the most critical decisions facing working parents during their children's early years. This guide is designed to help you find providers, resources, and information to assist you in developing a child care plan suited to the needs of your family. We have included several checklists and articles located under Forms, Checklists, and Additional Resources that we hope are useful in your search for child care.

A Guide to Your Child Care Options will help you to
- Understand the various types of care and how they can meet your child's needs
- Ask prospective providers and programs the right questions
- Make the most of a visit to a care center or agency
- Decide which child care situation is best for your child
- Make your child care arrangement work

Of course, even the most highly qualified provider cannot replace you as a parent. No program, teacher, or nanny will be able to invest as much energy into your child's care as you. But millions of families have found quality child care that enhances their children's world, promoting emotional, social, cognitive, and physical growth.

In addition to A Guide to Your Child Care Options, remember that Anthem EAP, your Employee Assistance Program, is also available to provide support and guidance through this process. Child Care Specialists can help identify local care centers, help you develop a back-up care plan, or just listen if you need someone to talk to. You can access Anthem EAP by calling 1-888-441-8674.

The ACFC is a joint CWA/Verizon committee here to support you and your family as you navigate all of life's stages. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can be of additional assistance.

— The Advisory Council on Family Care
This guide is one of the many ways that the Work/Life Programs can help you manage your work, family, and personal life demands. We also encourage you to take advantage of the additional expertise, information, and materials that are available through our comprehensive service.

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The purpose of this publication is to offer information, support, and guidance. It is not intended to provide advice or recommendations.
# Table of Contents

I. Before You Start Searching for Child Care ................. 5
   Set Priorities ............................................. 6
   Understanding Your Child's Developmental Needs .... 7

II. Types of Care—Exploring Your Options .......... 7
   Family Day Care ........................................... 8
   Child Care Centers ...................................... 9
   In-Home Child Care ..................................... 10

III. How to Evaluate Providers and Programs ....... 12
   Screening Providers by Telephone .................... 12
   Visiting Family Day Care and/or Child Care Centers 12
   Checking References ................................... 13
   Licensed Care ............................................ 13
   Group Size and Adult-Child Ratios .................... 13
   Caregivers: Turnover, Training and Personality .... 13
   Educational Philosophy/Curriculum ................. 15
   Discipline ............................................... 15
   The Complaint History ................................ 15
   Making Your Choice ................................... 15
   Accreditation .......................................... 16

IV. Paying for Child Care .............................. 16
   Tax Credits ................................................ 16
   Dependent Care Assistance Plans .................... 16
   Corporate Financial Assistance Programs .......... 16
   Corporate Child Care Discounts ................. 16
   Sliding Scale ............................................ 16

V. Beginning a New Care Arrangement ............ 17
   What Is Separation Anxiety? ....................... 17
   Easing Anxiety ........................................ 17

VI. Making Your Care Arrangement Work .......... 18
   Have Clear Expectations of
   Your Provider/Program .............................. 18
   Parental Responsibilities ................................ 18
   Parental Involvement .................................... 19
   Ongoing Parent/Provider Communication ........ 19
   Resolving Conflict: A Problem-Solving Approach .... 19
   Filing Formal Child Care Complaints ........... 20

VII. Planning for the Unexpected ................. 20
   Emergency/Back-Up and Sick Care ................ 20
   Holiday/Vacation Care Solutions .................. 20
   Odd-Hour Care: Evening, Overnight and Weekend Care 21

VIII. Special Situations ................................ 21
   School-Age Child Care .............................. 21
   When Relatives Provide Care ....................... 21
   Finding Care for More Than One Child ............ 22
   Care Considerations When Relocating ............ 22
   Children With Special Needs ....................... 22

IX. You Are Not Alone: How the Child Care Specialists at Anthem EAP Can Help 23

Forms, Checklists, and Additional Resources .... 24
   Care Center Pre-Screening Telephone Interview Checklist 24
   Care Center Visit Checklist ........................... 25
   Parent/Provider Contract ............................ 27
I. Before You Start Searching for Child Care

The best child care for your family is ultimately a personal choice. The right arrangement for you and your child will depend on variables such as your child's personality and age, your family's financial situation, where you live, where you work, and what's available. This guide will help you set your priorities, research your options, pick a child care arrangement, and make it work. And remember: the sooner you start your research, the better off you'll be (Table 1).

Table 1. When Should I Start My Search?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>It is important to start searching for child care some time before it will be needed:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• It may take a while to find out what's available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It may take a while for you to visit all the possible providers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providers may be booked far in advance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no care is available at a particular place or with a particular person at the time of your call, add your name to the waiting list so that you will be informed when a space opens up for your child. It's okay to put your name on several waiting lists and to check in occasionally to receive an update.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In-Your-Home Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Regardless of your child’s age, start searching two to four months before care will be needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If using agencies, contact them six to eight weeks before care will needed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infants/Toddlers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Start searching as far in advance as possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Openings for this age group are often limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child Care Center waiting lists may be six months to a year for children under two years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Providers may be able to predict when spaces will become available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preschoolers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• For year-round care, start searching two to four months before care will be needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For school-year care, register in the late winter or early spring for the following school year (that is, six to nine months in advance)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School-Age Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• For school-year before- and/or after-school care, start searching at least six months in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• For summertime arrangements, also start searching six months in advance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Set Priorities
The first step is to answer some important questions.

- **Type of Care**
  - Do you want someone watching your child in your home?
  - Do you want your child to be with a large group of kids with many providers?
  - Do you want your child to be in a smaller group with fewer providers?

- **Location**
  - What is your first-choice location?
  - Do you want care near home or work, or between the two?
  - How far are you willing to travel for the best care arrangement?
  - What transportation alternatives will you have if your usual form of transportation is not available?
  - Is it important that your child care provider be able to provide transportation sometimes or regularly?

- **Hours**
  - What hours do you need child care? (Remember to include travel time.)
  - How often do you work late or need to get to work early?
  - Might your schedule change?
  - How can you and your partner/spouse (or friend or neighbor) take turns dropping off and/or picking up your child?

- **Other**
  - Is it important to you that a child care provider have a certain level of education and/or a license?
  - Do you prefer that your child care provider be affiliated with a particular religion or other group?
  - Do you prefer that your child care provider use a particular educational model?
  - When you picture your child
being happy in child care, what does that picture look like? Does it include a lot of personal attention? Physical activity? Educational activity? Other kids to play with? Outdoor play?

Understanding Your Child’s Developmental Needs
Having a realistic understanding of your child’s developmental stage will help you select care that meets your child’s emotional, social, and cognitive needs. Of course, no one knows your child better than you do, but a basic overview of common traits and milestones can be helpful.

Infant Traits and Milestones
- Forming attachments with caregivers
- Adapting to a regular schedule of eating and sleeping
- Demanding attention from adults
- Exploring the world
- Using their bodies to get what they need and to express themselves
- Beginning to grasp and hold onto objects
- Experiencing separation anxiety
- Developing muscular control and physical strength
- Learning to crawl and walk
- Needing to be held and comforted when they cry or express distress
- Craving visual and emotional stimulation

Preschooler Traits and Milestones
- Testing limits
- Beginning to use the word “no” (a lot)

School-Age Children Traits and Milestones
- Learning how to relate to peers in social settings
- Developing fine-motor and gross-motor skills
- Making simple decisions when provided with limited choices
- Developing more advanced language skills
- Testing limits of independence and of adult authority
- Identifying colors and shapes
- Expressing themselves through art and play
- Taking on small responsibilities
- Learning the alphabet and counting
- Expressing curiosity about others’ feelings

Toddler Traits and Milestones
- Naming people and objects
- Becoming aware of other children and initiating interactions with them
- Wanting a certain amount of independence and control over the environment
- Starting to potty train
- Being able to feed themselves
- Learning through experimentation and play
- Mastering the ability to walk and move around in a child-proof environment
- Beginning to use language to communicate

II. Types of Care—Exploring Your Options

The three main child care options are Family Day Care (that is, care in someone’s home), Child Care Centers, and In-Home Care. This chapter discusses each option in detail, including advantages and disadvantages. (Chapter III: How to Evaluate Providers and Programs focuses on how to evaluate particular providers and programs and includes useful checklists.)

Cost. In general, Family Day Care is the least expensive, Child Care Centers are more expensive, and In-Home Care is the most expensive.
Advantages and disadvantages. While the options are discussed in detail in this section, Table 2 provides a quick overview.

Note. This chapter focuses on care for infants, toddlers, and pre-school-age children. Child care for school-age children is discussed in Chapter VIII: Special Situations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. A Comparison of the Different Types of Child Care</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advantages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY DAY CARE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Least expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Flexible scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Possible part-time or odd-hour care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child can develop consistent relationship with one or more adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More widely available, especially for children under two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHILD CARE CENTERS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wide range of educational philosophies and curricula available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Care is dependable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Holidays and other days off scheduled in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child can develop consistent relationship with one or more adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Most centers have open-door policies that allow parents to visit the program unannounced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IN-HOME CHILD CARE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offers the greatest flexibility in scheduling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Allows parents the most control over the child’s daily activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child is cared for in own home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child receives more focused attention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Child can develop consistent relationship with one adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Siblings can remain together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Family Day Care

Family Day Care is care that occurs in someone’s home. The provider generally cares for a small group of children; ages may range from six weeks to 12 years of age. Family Day Care is usually less structured than a center environment, with fewer children and the comfort of a home setting.
Family Day Care providers are usually regulated by state licensing authorities. While regulations vary widely from state to state, the following are usually true:

- Providers must meet state requirements regarding training, experience, and education, as well as safety and hygiene.
- The number of children the provider can care for at one time is limited (usually five to seven).
- Providers cannot care for more than two children under the age of two.
- Providers may be licensed for Group Family Day Care and care for eight to 12 children; however, a second adult must be present at all times.

The Family Day Care Situation

- Several rooms in a separate part of the house are set up for children.
- Various toys and activities are available.
- The provider may have structured activities based on, for example, the season or upcoming holidays.
- The provider’s children may participate in activities with the group.
- Members of the provider’s family may be in the house.
- The provider’s pets may interact with the children.
- The provider may use her own yard as an outdoor play space or may take the children to a nearby park or playground.
- The provider may participate in a community-based food program.

Keep in Mind

- Your child may spend the day with older children, younger children, or both.
- The provider is a professional who is running a business and will probably take a vacation at some point. This eventuality should be discussed by parent and provider before the start of care.
- Accreditation: The National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) supports providers of family-based child care. Individuals who have achieved NAFCC accreditation have met the highest standards available in the family child care field. If you are interested in locating a nationally accredited family child care provider, visit www.nafcc.org, or contact your Child Care Specialists.

Child Care Centers

Child Care Centers provide care at organized facilities. Centers are licensed to accept children in certain age groups, e.g., six weeks to five years of age or school-age (Table 3). Some centers offer private kindergarten programs.

Child Care Centers tend to provide a more structured educational setting than offered by Family Day Care or In-Home Care. Most centers follow organized daily schedules, with planned activities for children of different ages.

Child Care Centers are licensed by their respective states and are required to meet health and safety requirements. Child care staff members must also meet basic requirements for training, experience, and education. Centers are run by a director and sometimes an assistant director; each group of children has a head teacher, with an assistant or two. Child Care Centers usually keep standard hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. However, some open earlier and/or close later.

(Nursery Schools or Preschools are programs that also meet in center settings. Their minimum entry age is usually close to three years old, and the child must be potty trained. These programs tend to be part-time and usually operate only during the school year.)

The Child Care Center Situation

- Children are grouped together by age and remain with their class for most of the day.
- There are scheduled eating, sleeping, and outdoor play times.
- Classrooms are often organized into a variety of stations, each of which

“We searched forever to find child care with a good adult/child ratio. We finally found a wonderful couple who care for only seven children, total. We are thrilled that our daughter will receive one-on-one attention and develop meaningful relationships with adults and other children.”
encourages the development of a specific skill through a range of activities. It is common for classrooms to have stations for art, blocks, reading, dramatic play, and science.

- A head teacher and one or more assistant teachers tend to the children's needs.
- There is easy access to toys and materials.
- There are periods when children play together informally.
- Outside specialists may be brought in to teach/supervise particular topics or activities; parents are often charged an additional fee for these programs.
- Older children may be taken on field trips to local places of interest.

- Place ads in community newspapers and magazines.
- Put up flyers at local colleges, doctors' offices, and other central locations.
- Put up announcements on any relevant websites.
  - Craigslist is a good place to start if you live in a metropolitan area.
  - Many areas have parent websites or online “communities” which may include classifieds.
- Interview candidates by phone first, to save time.
  - Start with the basics: What hours would you be available? What is your experience?
- Next, interview candidates in person.
  - Make sure your child is there for at least part of the interview.
  - Check references, do background checks, etc.
- See Chapter III: How to Evaluate Providers and Programs for more information.

Table 3. Age Groups
(May vary in different locations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant</td>
<td>6 weeks to walking unassisted (~18 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toddler</td>
<td>18 months to 2½ or 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>2½ to 5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>5 to 6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School-Age</td>
<td>6 to 12 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In-Home Child Care

In-Home Care arrangements allow a child to remain at home surrounded by familiar toys and objects. In-Home Care providers, often called nannies or babysitters, may or may not live with the family. There is no established salary for nannies; families and nannies negotiate the terms of the agreement, including salary, hours, and vacation time. Salaries vary considerably depending on the location and the experience and training of the caregiver.

There are two ways to find a nanny: searching for one yourself (more work) or going through an agency (more expense).

Searching for a Caregiver Yourself

- Start at least a few months before you will actually need to hire someone.
- Ask for recommendations from friends and neighbors.

Remember, Anthem EAP can provide support and guidance in your child care search. Call 1-888-441-8674 to learn more.
Using a Placement Agency

If you use an in-home placement agency, the agency is responsible for the initial interview and, usually, any background checks. You can request to speak to a number of candidates, and you can specify some criteria beforehand (e.g., must live in, must be experienced with children with special needs). You then interview the candidates and make the final decision.

Before choosing an agency, ask the following questions:
- What fees are involved, e.g., registration, application, placement, membership? Any others?
- Are fees refundable? Under what circumstances?
- Are you a member of the International Nanny Association (INA) or Alliance of Professional Nanny Agencies (APNA)?
- Do you do background checks?
- What if my nanny doesn’t work out? (Most agencies have a guarantee period, usually three months, during which you can select a new provider if the first one you chose doesn’t work out.)

NOTE: providers who are registered with an agency are not necessarily more qualified than providers you find on your own.

Your Responsibilities

If you choose an in-home provider, you are an employer and must obtain and submit the appropriate paperwork and forms from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and state employment office.

Becoming an employer brings with it a variety of subtle responsibilities as well. Consider the following ways to increase your nanny’s job satisfaction:
- Make your home a comfortable place to work.
- Create an environment that fosters trust and appreciation.
- Communicate with your nanny often, not just when conflicts arise, and be an approachable employer.
- Emphasize that you are willing to be flexible to make the situation work.
- Give time off and occasional bonuses.
- Consider giving other benefits as well; find out what is typical in your community.
- Remember to say thank you!

Au Pairs and EduCare

Au pairs are young adults, usually between the ages of 18 and 26, who come from other countries to live and work in your home for up to two years; they are permitted to be employed up to 10 hours a day (maximum total, 45 hours per week) and must have their own room. (For further information, do a search for “au pair” at www.usa.gov.) Au pairs are typically younger than nannies and may have less child care experience and formal education. While families who hire au pairs are responsible for the cost of their transportation to the United States and a weekly stipend, employing an au pair is usually less expensive than hiring a nanny. Depending on your needs, au pairs can make wonderful caregivers. Parents often feel that au pairs become a part of their family.

In the EduCare program, the au pair works part-time and goes to college part-time. This situation is usually more effective when your children are in school or perhaps one or both parents are working part-time. More information is available at www.usa.gov.

The In-Home Care Situation
- Provider may plan daily activities.
- Provider and child may leave the house for errands or to go to the park or a museum, etc., at any point during the day.
- While the child sleeps, the provider may read, do other work, talk on the phone, watch TV, etc. Depending on your arrangement, some providers may do light housekeeping during this time, such as cleaning up toys, washing dishes, or doing laundry.

“We recently hired a nanny to care for our children, and I’m very pleased. My three children get to spend time together, and I like that they don’t have to eat or play or sleep according to a Day Care Center’s schedule.”
The ACFC (Advisory Council on Family Care) is a joint CWA/Verizon committee negotiated to help meet the family and daily life/work needs of the CWA represented employees in the Mid-Atlantic region.

- The child may play independently for a while with the provider close by to ensure safety.
- The parent may arrange for the child and provider to participate in play groups or to meet other nannies and children in the neighborhood.

III. How to Evaluate Providers and Programs

Screening Providers by Telephone

Telephone screening allows you to get a first impression of candidates and eliminate those who are clearly inappropriate. Be sensitive about calling caregivers during the day, since they may well be working and may prefer to speak with you in the evening.

During the phone interview:
- Request general information, such as hours, schedules, fees, availability, and location.
- Discuss approaches to caring for children.
- Ask about specific program policies—for example:
  - Is care available during holidays/vacations?
  - Do fees change as your child gets older?
  - Are meals provided?
  - Do they arrange for back-up care?
  - Is there a fee for late pick-ups?
  - Is there a fee for late payments?
- Ask how the caregiver would handle a child who is having trouble saying good-bye to his parent(s).

If the initial conversation goes well, set up an appointment to meet. (The Care Center Pre-Screening Telephone Interview Checklist can be found in Forms, Checklists, and Additional Resources.)

Visiting Family Day Care and/or Child Care Centers

It helps to visit a variety of centers so that you can get a feel for what each has to offer. You should feel welcome from the time you walk in! Ask for a tour and chat a little bit with the teachers. If you have time, stay a while to get a feeling for the daily routine and atmosphere of the place. (See Forms, Checklists, and Additional Resources for a Care Center Visit Checklist.)

You will probably want to ask questions such as the following:
- What types of daily activities are scheduled for children of different ages?
- Can children choose the activities in which they participate?
- Are children required to sleep if they aren’t tired?
- Can infants and toddlers establish their own sleeping and eating schedules? (This may not be an option in group care settings.)
- What are the policies about using the television, DVD player, and computer?
- What type of supervision is provided when children are outdoors?
- Do children need to leave the facility area (e.g., cross any streets) to play outdoors? If so, what precautions are taken to ensure safety?
- Is there an open-door policy—that is, are parents welcome to visit unannounced anytime during the day?
- How are children handled if they have a hard time following rules?
- What are the necessary steps to enroll a child?

Parents should try to arrange at least two visits with each potential provider or program.

First visit: It’s best to make your first visit when the children are interacting so that you can get a useful first impression of what it might be like for your child in this program. On this visit, focus on three principal areas: the provider, the space, and the program.

Second visit: The second visit allows you to focus specifically on your child’s needs and your concerns. It is best to schedule the second visit either during naptime or at another time when the director or provider can give you his full attention. At this point in the process,
many providers and program directors will want to meet your child. It is suggested that parents only involve children after narrowing the possibilities down to just a few options; the process of touring too many different programs can be very confusing and anxiety-provoking for children.

Checking References

Once you have visited each provider or program director, it is time to check the references of the ones who impressed you the most. Ask each provider/director for the telephone numbers of parents whose children were formerly enrolled and parents whose children are currently enrolled. Then contact those families directly. Ask the parents open-ended questions about the program and the caregivers:

- What does the family like about the program/provider? What don’t they like?
- Why did they decide to choose this program/provider?
- What have they been most pleased with?
- What has been their biggest disappointment?
- Has their child enjoyed the experience?
- Do they think their child has developed emotionally, cognitively, physically, and socially in the program?
- Would they recommend the program/provider to others?

Licensed Care

One of the most common misconceptions about child care is that a license is a guarantee of quality. Actually, licensing requires programs or providers to meet only minimal health and safety standards: Quality varies immensely among licensed providers.

Despite this fact, parents should always attempt to select a licensed care provider or program, as they are responsible to a government authority regarding conditions and standards and must follow state regulations. In general, higher quality is usually found in a program/provider that surpasses the criteria demanded by the state.

See Forms, Checklists, and Additional Resources for the Environment Checklist, which lists the fundamentals of a safe child care environment.

Group Size and Adult-Child Ratios

Research has shown that a small group size contributes to children’s increased involvement in activities, as well as improved cooperation with caregivers and other children. The ratio of providers to children, which is closely associated with group size, is a vital component of quality. Although states mandate minimum standard ratios, parents should search for programs that offer even better ratios. And don’t automatically rule out centers that enroll many children; they may operate in small clusters/sections/classes with excellent adult-child ratios.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is a professional early childhood educational organization that promotes the healthy development of young children. Their guidelines for group size and adult-child ratios in center-based care are provided in Table 4.

Note: Since In-Home Child Care is an unlicensed form of care, no standard ratios exist. Usually one provider cares for all the children in a given family.

Caregivers: Turnover, Training and Personality

Studies show that the best care is provided by caregivers with a thorough understanding of the needs of both parents and children. These individuals usually have a background in early childhood education or child development, as well as a commitment to continued training. Outstanding providers attend workshops and seminars and often belong to professional organizations to stay up-to-date with current teaching trends and child development topics. Since the quality of your caregiver strongly affects the care your child will receive, it is essential to get to know your caregiver. Parents should seek a provider who is warm, affectionate, responsive, and respectful of
The ACFC (Advisory Council on Family Care) is a joint CWA/Verizon committee negotiated to help meet the family and daily life/work needs of the CWA represented employees in the Mid-Atlantic region.

Table 4. NAEYC Guidelines for Group Size and Adult-Child Ratios in Center-Based Care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Recommended Group Size</th>
<th>Recommended Caregiver-Child Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Up to 1 year</td>
<td>6-8 children</td>
<td>• 1:3 for 6 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:4 for 8 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>6-12 children</td>
<td>• 1:3 for 6 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:4 for 8 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:5 for 10 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td>8-14 children</td>
<td>• 1:4 for 8 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:5 for 10 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:6 for 12 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:7 for 14 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4 years</td>
<td>14-20 children</td>
<td>• 1:7 for 14 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:8 for 16 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:9 for 18 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:10 for 20 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-5 years</td>
<td>16-20 children</td>
<td>• 1:8 for 16 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:9 for 18 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:10 for 20 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8 years</td>
<td>20-24 children</td>
<td>• 1:10 for 20 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:11 for 22 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:12 for 24 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12 years</td>
<td>24-28 children</td>
<td>• 1:12 for 24 children&lt;br&gt;• 1:14 for 28 children</td>
</tr>
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</table>

children of all ages and developmental abilities. *Family Day Care: Some Family Day Care providers have been in the business of child care for many years. Longevity usually indicates a provider who enjoys caring for children and who is committed to maintaining or improving the quality of care. (Of course, new providers may be just as qualified or committed.) Many Family Day Care providers have attended college and some even have advanced degrees in psychology, nursing, or early childhood education. In addition, many providers are parents themselves. Quality providers often choose to belong to a locally-organized Family Day Care association or network. These organizations typically offer professional support and training opportunities covering a variety of curriculum, safety, and developmental topics.*

*Child Care Center: Low teacher turnover in a Child Care Center is an important indicator of quality. Staffing stability is a sign of a program that is dedicated to caring for and educating children. Consistency of staff enables children to feel secure, develop trust, and form positive, long-lasting relationships. In addition, staff members should have educational backgrounds in relevant*

“I met with my new provider to discuss our different approaches toward discipline. It was important for me to understand her philosophy, and now I feel confident that she will discipline my child appropriately.”
Disciplines and receive ongoing training. 

**In-Home Child Care:** In-home providers are not required to comply with state regulations. Some providers become certified in CPR and receive first aid training. Some have backgrounds in early childhood education; others choose to take specific courses about child development issues. Many placement agencies offer training and workshop opportunities to interested caregivers.

**Educational Philosophy/Curriculum**

All quality programs follow some form of educational philosophy or curriculum, such as Montessori, High/Scope, Whole Language, Child Centered, Piaget, Multicultural, or Reggio Emilio. The specific philosophy utilized by a program reveals a great deal about its educational goals. Some programs follow a philosophy strictly, while other providers use it loosely to guide their approach to education. (To learn more about educational philosophies, contact Anthem EAP and speak with a Child Care Specialist.)

It is important that you understand and feel comfortable with the philosophy of the provider you select. Remember that just because a program follows an educational approach with a fancy-sounding title does not imply or guarantee quality. Also, there are many providers (Family Day Care, Child Care Centers, and In-Home) who have outstanding educational goals for the children in their care but don’t follow a formal philosophy.

A good curriculum:
- encourages social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth
- is developmentally appropriate
- allows for individual variation in learning styles and speeds

**Discipline**

Since beliefs and ideas about disciplining children are quite personal, it is important to select a care arrangement in which your provider’s approach to discipline closely matches your own. Although a variety of approaches to discipline exist in child care settings, early childhood professionals agree that there are several aspects universal to all quality programs:
- Rules and guidelines should be clearly explained to children. Clear expectations encourage children to behave properly.
- Children should never be threatened or subjected to ridicule or any type of abuse.
- Providers/programs should use positive reinforcement, rather than criticism, to encourage positive behavior. This approach promotes individual growth.
- Children should be encouraged to solve problems and learn cooperation. This allows children to become resourceful, while teaching the importance of compromise.
- Rewards and punishments should relate directly to a child’s specific behavior or action. Children do not learn as much when rewards or punishments are not direct consequences of their actions.
- Food should not be withheld or provided as a punishment or reward.
- “Time outs” are effective forms of discipline in appropriate situations; they should last no more than one minute for each year of the child’s age.

**The Complaint History**

Before making your final decision, check the complaint history of the providers you are considering. You can obtain this information by contacting the local office of your state licensing authority, which will have a record of all formally filed complaints. But do keep in mind that, although they are an important factor to consider, complaint histories are not necessarily an accurate representation of the quality of care currently being offered by a provider. (For further details on checking and filing formal complaints, see Chapter VI: Making Your New Care Arrangement Work.)

**Making Your Choice**

When you make your final decision, notify the provider as soon as possible. Also let the others know your decision. It’s the courteous thing to do, and it leaves a door open for you to use them in the future, perhaps for back-up care.

“When I picked up my son yesterday, my provider told me that he had hit another little boy, so she gave him a ‘time out.’ She said that he realized what he had done wrong and behaved nicely for the rest of the day. I feel good about how she handled the situation.”
Accreditation

Child Care Center accreditation is offered by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Child Care Association (NCCA). Accreditation signals that a program meets national standards of quality, as determined by the NAEYC or the NCCA, in addition to those required for state licensing, and demonstrates a serious commitment to providing high-quality care.

In some locations, Family Day Care associations have created accreditation standards of their own. These guidelines may, for example, require a certain number of education or training hours per year. Keep in mind that programs/providers who do not apply for accreditation may be as good as or even better than those who do.

IV. Paying for Child Care

As previously discussed, Family Day Care is the least expensive option, Child Care Centers come next, and In-Home Child Care is the most expensive. In addition, costs may vary widely from state to state and even neighborhood to neighborhood; you might find, for example, that care near where you work is less or more expensive than care near your home.

Both private and public initiatives exist to help lower the cost of care. For example, the federal government offers a child care tax credit to qualifying families. Most states sponsor child care subsidy programs to help lower-income working families better afford care. In addition, some providers will adjust their fees in proportion to a family’s income (sliding scale). Child care provided through organizations such as the YMCA may be offered at a reduced price to members.

Tax Credits
You may be able to reduce your taxes by claiming the Child and Dependent Care Credit (CDCC), which allows you to deduct a percentage of your child care costs. Conditions for applying for credit can be found on the IRS website. Many states also have tax credit programs for child care.

Dependent Care Assistance Plans

Your employer may offer a Dependent Care Assistance Plan (DCAP), also known as a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), which allows you to set aside pre-tax income (annual maximum, $5,000) to be used for eligible dependent care expenses (if there are two parents, both must work in order to qualify, unless one is disabled or a student). The amount designated for eligible child care expenses is deducted from your paycheck over the course of the year. You pay for the child care and then are reimbursed from the non-taxed DCAP money set aside during the year. (Some plans have a special debit card so that you can spend the DCAP money directly, without having to wait for reimbursement.)

Corporate Financial Assistance Programs

Financial assistance programs come in a variety of forms. Your employer may provide vouchers for child care or arrange for discounted slots at licensed child care programs in the community. Some organizations supplement the money put into a DCAP (described above) for low-income employees.

Corporate Child Care Discounts

Some employers contract with a national child care center chain for reduced rates for employees, as follows:

- The discount usually ranges from 5% to 15%.
- Registration fees may be cut or waived.
- The discount may only apply to children over two years of age.
- The discount may only be applicable to licensed care arrangements.
- There may be eligibility restrictions such as length of employment.

Sliding Scale

Some individual providers/programs offer
scholarship slots or charge tuition based on a sliding scale, with costs reduced for low-income parents.

If you have any questions, contact Anthem EAP and speak to a Child Care Specialist.

V. Beginning a New Care Arrangement

Transitioning to a new child care arrangement may be difficult for both parent and child, but learning how to cope with separation anxiety can make it easier for both of you.

What Is Separation Anxiety?
Separation anxiety is the distress felt by a child at being separated from a parent or other significant caregiver.

Your child’s feelings. Episodes of separation anxiety can begin as early as seven months and can last until three or four years of age. The good news is that separation anxiety subsides over time. Children eventually learn that although parents “disappear,” they do return.

Your feelings. Parents may experience separation anxiety as well. On the one hand, you may feel a sense of relief at having found a suitable care arrangement. On the other hand, you may feel nervous and guilty about leaving your child with someone else. Most parents go through many emotions before they become comfortable with a new care arrangement.

Your caregiver’s input. Your caregiver may have specific ways to help your child say good-bye to you. Some caregivers encourage parents to stay until the child is settled, while others may feel it is best for parents to not linger. If your child becomes upset when you leave, the caregiver will know how to comfort and distract him.

Easing Anxiety
Children can sense their parents’ uneasiness, which makes separation even more difficult for them. Help your child to have a positive attitude by showing confidence and enthusiasm for the provider/program you have selected. Talk about all of the exciting, new opportunities and experiences that await your child. As hard as it may be, try not to focus on the sadness and difficulty of saying good-bye. And remember: it gets easier, often in only a few days.

Transition Tips
- Visit the program at least once with your child ahead of time.
- Talk with your child about the activities that he can look forward to.
- Discuss the new daily schedule.
- Stay with your child for a few hours on the first day, if it’s okay with the caregiver.
- Bring along a photo of your family or a special object from home that is comforting to her.
- Tell your child who will be coming to pick him up and when (e.g., after nap, before snack).
- Make sure your child is engaged in an activity or talking to someone else before saying good-bye.
• Say good-bye to your child and then leave. Don't try to sneak out when your child isn't looking.
• If your child does experience separation anxiety, don't be late to pick her up.

And don't forget:
• It is normal for children and parents to experience some separation anxiety.
• Remember that you are leaving your child with professional providers who are competent and caring.
• Just as you go to work every morning, so does your child. Playing and learning at child care is your child's work.
• Child care is a normal, healthy component of many children's lives, and adjustment to child care paves the way for school-readiness.
• Children are resilient and adaptable.
• It gets easier every day!

VI. Making Your New Care Arrangement Work

Once the new child care arrangement has begun, it is crucial to do all you can to ensure its long-term success. The best way to accomplish this goal is by developing a positive working relationship with your caregiver.

Your caregiver is now your partner in the mission of caring for your child; as part of this relationship, be sure to give compliments, say thank you, and generally show appreciation for her.

But what if there's a conflict? What if you don't agree with how she handles a situation? How should you approach her? What's reasonable to expect in the first place? This chapter answers those and other questions.

Have Clear Expectations of Your Provider/Program

Discuss your expectations of care with your provider before your child starts going to child care. Also, confirm the terms of the agreement, including transportation arrangements, extra fees, and holiday/vacation/back-up care.

Be sure to communicate detailed information about your child, including:
• Your specific philosophy about discipline
• Any food or dietary restrictions
• Specific foods that your child enjoys
• Your child's nap schedule
• Special medical or developmental conditions
• Your child's developmental stage

Rule of thumb: Share with your provider any information that he might need to know to do a good job. No detail is too obvious or too small.

One of the best ways to clarify expectations is to create a Parent-Provider Contract that outlines the responsibilities of both parties involved. See Forms and Checklists for a sample. (Also, remember that sometimes you will need to be flexible and compromise.) By beginning this new relationship with clearly defined expectations, you are creating a strong foundation for continued communication.

Parental Responsibilities

Just as you have needs and expectations from this new relationship, so does your caregiver. Be sure to act respectfully by observing her policies and by fulfilling your end of your agreement. Parental responsibilities include:
• Dropping off and picking up your child on time (for in-home care, this means returning home on time)
• Bringing all requested items from home, including diapers, formula, baby food, special toys or blankets, and medications
• Informing your provider about any unusual occurrences since he last saw your child (e.g., your child didn't sleep well, didn't eat breakfast, fell and was injured)
• Telling your provider about major changes in your child's life (e.g., a new sibling, relocation, death in the family, sibling leaving home)
• Paying on time
• Being considerate of the provider's private life
In case of emergency, provide your work and cell phone numbers, your spouse's or partner's work and cell phone numbers, and contact information for neighbors, relatives, the child's pediatrician, etc.

Parental Involvement
For many parents, actively participating in their child's care community helps to lessen feelings of guilt about leaving their child with someone else. Being involved also provides you with an opportunity to affect the quality of care that your child receives. Below are some interesting and rewarding ways to become a partner in your child's care:

- Volunteer to sit on the advisory board of the program or center
- Create or join a parent group with a focus on a topic such as education, nutritional concerns, or outdoor safety precautions
- Chair a fundraising effort
- Chaperone field trips or other special outings
- Visit your child during the day as often as possible
- Familiarize yourself with the experiences and routines of your child's day
- Volunteer once a month, or as often as possible
- Offer to supply materials for art projects

Ongoing Parent/Provider Communication
Establishing good communication with your provider is the cornerstone to creating a successful and effective partnership. If you develop a healthy, open relationship with your provider from the beginning, your child will follow your lead. The more contact and exchange of information, the better informed you will be about your child's daily experiences. Here are a few suggestions on how to maintain frequent communication and foster honesty and respect:

- Speak to your caregiver informally when you pick up your child
- Ask the provider to keep notes, a log, or diary regarding your child's daily activities
- Schedule weekly or bimonthly conferences to discuss your child's progress, as well as any difficulties he may be having

Resolving Conflict: A Problem-Solving Approach
As in any relationship, conflicts may arise between you and your caregiver. If so, it is always best to deal with problems immediately, rather than ignore them and hope that they will go away. They won't.

Adopt a problem-solving approach to resolving conflict. Here are some steps that may help:

- Assume that you have the skills available to solve the problem—this positive attitude will help you achieve a positive outcome.
- Think carefully about how you would like to see the conflict resolved.
- Plan how to communicate this solution to your caregiver without insulting or offending him.
  - Avoid sounding accusatory (e.g., don't say, "I don't like how you are disciplining my child.")
  - Focus on goals (e.g., do say, "Could we find a different way to deal with my son's anger?")
  - Remember to also note what the caregiver is doing well—and say thank you!
- Choose a quiet and private time to inform your caregiver that you'd like to speak to her about the problem.
- Schedule a meeting to discuss the problem (without your child there).
- At the meeting, remember to listen to your caregiver.
- Try not to become defensive.
- Remember that you and your caregiver are a team working toward a common goal.
- Understand that your caregiver may not do exactly what you'd prefer due to available resources and his expertise and skills.
- Respect your caregiver's judgment even if you don't think her solution is ideal.

“My daughter is a little over three years old, and she isn't potty trained yet. Her teacher suggested that I put less pressure on my daughter to catch up to the other kids. His advice was very helpful.”
• Try to find a compromise that works for both of you.
• Schedule a time to reevaluate the situation in the near future.

**Filing Formal Child Care Complaints**

While frightening stories of abused or neglected children seem occasionally to be in the news, the reality is that the vast majority of providers and programs take their professional commitments seriously and treat children with love and respect.

However, if you suspect that your provider is in violation of licensing regulations or has displayed inappropriate behavior toward one or more children, it is your duty to bring this misconduct to the attention of the individual and to report it to the appropriate authority. (Contact information for the appropriate authority in your state can be found at the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education at http://nrc.uchsc.edu or 1-800-598-5437.)

Fortunately, most violations are minor and can be easily remedied, in which case the licensing agency will help the provider or program move back into compliance. However, a license may be revoked if a provider or program violates regulations enacted to ensure the children’s health and safety.

If you are using an In-Home Child Care provider, it is your job to regularly evaluate your situation and take appropriate actions to protect your family if necessary.

If you have any concerns about regulations, violations, or any other matter, contact Anthem EAP and speak to a Child Care Specialist.

If you are having trouble resolving an issue, you might want to call Anthem EAP and speak to a Child Care Specialist. And if a conflict arises that cannot be resolved, you can always decide to search for a new provider or program.

**VII. Planning for the Unexpected**

**Emergency/Back-Up Care and Sick Care**

Every parent has experienced the frustration that accompanies a breakdown in regular child care. It may be that dreaded call from your provider at 7:00 a.m. telling you that he is unavailable because of a family emergency, or perhaps your child wakes up too sick to attend child care. Regardless of the specific situation, arranging a dependable back-up plan—before the need arises—will help you avoid the stress of trying to find care at the last minute or having to miss a day of work.

Below are some possible sources for emergency/back-up and sick care:

• Ask your provider if she arranges for back-up on days when she is unavailable. If she does, find out the details of her back-up plan.
• Talk to family and friends about their willingness to be on call or to share their own in-home care arrangement—if their provider is willing—in the event that you need back-up care.
• Research back-up care options at local Child Care Centers and Family Day Care homes. Some providers offer drop-in care (your child must be preregistered before the care is needed). However, it may be hard to find a place near you that offers this option.
• Arrange in advance for an In-Home Care agency to provide a nanny or babysitter for back-up care.
• Check if your employer offers emergency/back-up care for employees’ children on site or nearby.

**Holiday/Vacation Care Solutions**

There are many care options available for children during school holidays and vacations. The key to finding the best possible arrangement is beginning your search far in advance. As soon as you know the dates of your child’s school holidays, start to look for back-up care. The earlier you begin, the better off you will be.
Options include the following:

• Year-round community centers, Child Care Centers, Family Day Care homes, and YMCAs
• In-home placement agencies
• High school or college students looking for babysitting jobs
• Friends or family members
• Sharing child care with parents of other children in your child’s class

Odd-Hour Care: Evening, Overnight, and Weekend Care

With more people working odd-hour shifts, there is an increasing demand for evening, overnight, and weekend care. Finding programs/providers who can accommodate these hours is a challenge, but it is not impossible. Once again, the key is exploring all care possibilities in advance and being creative.

Standard Options

• Some Family Day Care providers have overnight and weekend hours; others may extend their schedules for an additional fee.
• In-home agencies can place a provider for odd hours, but this option is expensive.
• Some Child Care Centers provide off-hour care for an extra fee, but they are few and far between.

Alternative Options

• Arrange for one partner/spouse to work while the other watches the child and vice versa.
• Create a patchwork schedule in which a variety of friends and family members care for your child on a rotating basis.
• Search for a college student, high school student, or retiree by posting signs, placing advertisements in local newspapers, and/or putting a listing on the Web.

VIII. Special Situations

School-Age Child Care

School-Age Child Care is specifically geared toward children five to 12 years of age—i.e., children who are not yet ready to be home alone when not in school. School-Age Child Care can be a before- and after-school program, a school holiday/vacation care program, a recreational summer camp program, or a combination of different options.

There are some special considerations that arise when searching for programs for a school-age child.

• Is suitable transportation available to and from school?
• Does the program offer a good balance of activity and down time?
• Does the after-school program allow quiet time for children to complete homework?
• Is there enough time for children to socialize?
• Is the program/provider creative in developing activities?

When Relatives Provide Care

After considering their child care options, many families choose a relative to care for their child. Families find this option attractive because they assume it will be more convenient, comfortable, and/or affordable—and they already know and trust the caregiver. As with other caregivers, it is important to treat a relative with respect and to clearly define your expectations. Here are a few suggestions to ensure a healthy caregiving relationship:

• Think carefully about your relative’s ability to take proper care of your child.
• Don’t assume that a relative will care for your child for free.
• Don’t assume that a relative automatically knows what your child needs.
“We paid for full-time child care for five years, plus private full-time kindergarten—the cost would have paid for a master’s degree at a state university! But it was worth it. I got to work and support my family, and my son had fun and learned.”

- Be sure to clarify the schedule of care in advance.
- Treat your relative just as well as you would treat a stranger—if not better.
- Use extra sensitivity when addressing problems with someone who is not only a caregiver, but also a family member.

Finding Care for More Than One Child

When selecting care for several children at once, there are some special considerations to contemplate. It helps to answer the following questions before starting your search:

- What environment will best meet the needs of each child?
- Is it the same for each child?
- Are separate care arrangements important to foster the children’s individual growth?
- What are the pros and cons of placing them in the same care arrangement? Separate care arrangements?
- Which type of child care would be most appropriate for your children?
  - **Family Day Care**: All children in Family Day Care are grouped together. Siblings who attend the same Family Day Care will have many interactions over the course of the day.
  - **Child Care Center**: In Child Care Centers, each child will be assigned to a classroom with other children the same age, and siblings may have limited or no contact. The exception is the small number of centers that place children in mixed-age groups, in which case siblings might remain with one another.
  - **In-Home Care**: With In-Home Care, siblings stay home together and usually have some choice as to how they relate during the day.

Fees: Often, keeping children together is the most cost-effective solution, since many Child Care Centers and Family Day Cares offer multiple-child discounts. In-home providers usually are paid more when caring for two or three children than when caring for one, but their pay is not usually doubled or tripled.

Care Considerations When Relocating

One of the most stressful elements of moving is finding new child care. You might want to start by calling Anthem EAP and asking a Child Care Specialist to provide you with referrals to child care resources in and information about your new community and larger region.

Here are some steps to follow when searching for child care in a new location:

- Review the different types of care and consider which would make this transition easier for your child(ren).
- Review a map of your new location to get a sense of convenient child care locations.
- Figure out the maximum number of hours you might need for care and begin searching to meet that need.
- Ask anyone you know in your new community for recommendations and information about local child care.
- If possible, visit the new location and speak to potential providers in person. Learn about your new area, including whether traffic is likely to increase your commuting time and therefore the hours that your child needs care.

Children With Special Needs

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects the rights of children with special needs by requiring that child care programs accept the applications of all children, regardless of their ability level. Providers are required to cooperate with parents in developing the most suitable accommodations for these children. However, providers are excused from making accommodations that will create an “undue burden” for them. This stipulation refers to modifications that will cause the provider to incur financial responsibility beyond her means. For example, creating ramp access to a Family Day Care home for a wheelchair may be too costly a renovation.

Consider the following questions when
searching for care for a child with special needs:

- Does the child care environment match your child's needs?
- Is the provider/program willing to make adjustments in the daily routine to meet your child's needs?
- Does the staff/provider display affection, warmth, and respect toward children with special needs?
- Is the staff/provider supportive and encouraging?
- Does the staff/provider have training or experience working with children with special needs?
- Will the philosophy of the program/provider promote your child's physical, social, cognitive, and emotional development?

IX. You Are Not Alone: How the Child Care Specialists at Anthem EAP Can Help

The search for outstanding child care is a complex process, both emotionally and logistically. However, there are excellent alternatives, and Anthem EAP Child Care Specialists are trained to assist you in sorting through a myriad of issues, from the pragmatic to the personal.

Your Child Care Specialists can

- help you consider your various options
- answer any questions you may have
- conduct a customized search for child care providers, based on your specific needs
- answer any parenting questions you may have

Within two to three days of speaking with a Child Care Specialist, you will receive objective referral information about several licensed providers or programs that meet your family's needs. (Note: Because we understand that only you can choose the best providers for your family's needs, we provide referrals and not recommendations.) You will also receive valuable educational materials. This service is free and confidential.

Finding the right care arrangement for your child takes energy and determination, but going to work in the morning with a clear mind and a feeling of confidence is worth all the effort. You'll be able to say good-bye to your child, take a deep breath, and begin your day on the right foot!
Basic Child Care Considerations

There are many important factors to consider when choosing child care. Here are some of the basics to consider when you are just beginning the process:

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<th>Child Care Center Information</th>
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<th>No</th>
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| Is the provider licensed or certified (if required by state law)?
| Is the provider available for the days and hours that are needed to fit my family's schedule?
| Are the provider fees within my budget?
| Is the provider located close to my home or work?
| Will my child have interaction with other children his or her age?
| If needed, is transportation available?
| Does the provider offer a structured environment?
| Does the provider offer social and educational programs?
| If needed, is the provider able to offer meals that are appropriate for my child?
| Does the provider have a lot of experience?
| Can the provider offer care to my child when he or she is sick?
| Is the provider, and any staff, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) and First Aid certified? |

For more information, education and resources on childcare contact

**Anthem EAP**

888-441-8674

[www.anthem.com/eap/verizon](http://www.anthem.com/eap/verizon)
Childcare: In-Home Safety Checklist

Young children are curious and love to explore their surroundings. This exploration is vital to the learning process, but hazards in the typical home can prove to be quite dangerous for young ones. Childproofing your home is one of the most important things you can do to insure the health of your child.

While there is no such thing as a completely safe environment, you can take a few simple precautions to limit the dangers. Remember, there is no replacement for keeping a watchful eye on your child. No safety device is foolproof, but you can lessen the chances of your child experiencing a household injury by using these devices correctly.

The following is a list of preventative measures and safety devices to protect your child:

- **Safety Latches on Cabinets, Drawers, and Toilet Seats**—These can help to prevent poisonings, drowning, and other injuries. A variety of latch types are available. Make sure to choose those that adults can easily install and use, but that are strong enough to withstand a child's pulling and grabbing. Keep dishwashers locked and keep knives out of reach.

- **Medicines and Poisons**—Make sure all of these items have safety caps and are stowed in locked cabinets or those with safety latches.

- **Lightweight Plastic Bags**—Keep garbage or dry cleaning bags away from children at all times.

- **Toys With Small Parts**—Keep these and other small objects away from children. A "no-choke" testing tube is available at most toy stores. Coins, batteries, and night lights or flashlights with small bulbs are also swallowing hazards. Keep out of reach.

- **Plants**—Some household plants are toxic and children can harm themselves when pulling over larger pots. Keep all plants out of reach.

- **Electronic Outlets**—Outlet covers and outlet plates can help prevent electrocution. These are available at any hardware store and where children's items are sold. Make sure to select covers that are not easily removed so as to prevent choking on them.

- **Safety Gates**—These are needed to prevent falls down the stairs or to keep children out of areas that are not safe. Gates that screw to the wall are more reliable than pressure gates. It is best to use newer safety gates because they meet more stringent safety standards.

- **Window Guards**—These can prevent a fall out of a window. There should be at least one window that can be use as a fire exit if necessary.

- **Anti-Scald Devices**—These devices should be used on all hot water faucets and shower heads. There is a good selection of devices that help test the temperature of bath water before bathing the little ones. Your hot water heater should be set at 120 Fahrenheit to help prevent burns. There should also be barriers around radiators or heaters.

- **Corner and Edge Bumpers**—Edge protectors should be placed on the edges of coffee tables and fireplaces to prevent injury from falls or collisions.

- **Window Blind or Drapery Cords**—Safety tassels and inner cord stops can be used to prevent children from being tangled up in unsafe cords. If your blinds are older, cords should be cut, and safety tassels should be added. If installing newer blinds, ask that safety features be added. You can contact the Window Covering Safety Council at 1-800-506-4636 or visit their Web site at http://www.windowcoverings.org/ to order a safety kit.

- **Door Knob Covers and Door Locks**—To prevent children from opening doors, these covers can be placed on doorknobs. They keep small hands from being able to open doors to potentially dangerous areas.
Door locks can be added to the upper part of doors to provide added security. This is especially important to prevent children from slipping outside if there is a backyard pool or fountain.

- **Cribs**—Use a crib that meets current safety standards. Make sure it has a firm, tight-fitting mattress to avoid having babies get stuck between the crib and the edge of the mattress. Never place babies in adult beds.
- **Smoke Detectors**—These should be installed on every level of your home and should be in good working order. Make sure you test them regularly and replace batteries at least once a year. Make sure there are working fire extinguishers in the home and that you know how to use them.
- **Carbon Monoxide Detectors**—Appropriate for all homes with gas or oil heat, or that have attached garages, these should be placed near sleeping areas to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Homes in colder climates with weather sealing are particularly vulnerable to carbon monoxide poisoning.
- **Cordless Telephone**—Cordless phones allow parents or caregivers to keep an eye on children at all times.
- **Emergency Procedures**—All households should review emergency procedures. Exits should be clear and emergency phone numbers posted. This is especially important if you have a caregiver or babysitter in your home.
- **CPR and First Aid Training**—Anyone taking care of a child should have training in both CPR and First Aid.
- **Firearms**—If you have a gun in the home it should be kept unloaded and locked up. Trigger locks provide additional protection. Ammunition should always be kept in a separate, secured location. Children should never have access to keys.

Use the section below to add additional safety precautions you are taking in your own home:

____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

Anthem EAP

888-441-8674

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Person you spoke to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of care center:</td>
<td>Phone number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Cell phone:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email:</td>
<td>Hours of operation:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensed?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accredited?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost:</td>
<td>Is there a waiting list?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including food?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Including supplies?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What's the age range of the children?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people work there?</td>
<td>How long have they worked there?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your staff know CPR and First Aid?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can you pick up or drop off my child?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the educational philosophy of the center?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

References: Contact info for parents whose children are or were enrolled here.

Do you close for holidays/vacations? When?

Post-Phone Call Notes [Did you feel listened to? Rushed? Did you like what they had to say? Did you feel the provider/director was honest and caring? Did you get a good feeling in general?]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Care Center Visit Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name of care center:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Address:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Was the place clean?</th>
<th>☐ Yes ☐ No</th>
<th>Did it smell nice?</th>
<th>☐ Yes ☐ No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Was there enough space?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>Did it seem safe?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were there safety gates?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>Was there an outdoor play area?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there a first aid kit?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>Were the kids happy?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did each child get individual attention?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>Was the staff calm, caring, patient?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was there a good variety of toys?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>Were the toys in good shape?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Were there nutritious snacks?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>Did they have books?</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment Checklist</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Safety**
- ☐ Security system
- ☐ Fire extinguishers
- ☐ Fire exits
- ☐ Smoke detectors
- ☐ First aid kits
- ☐ Cleaning supplies out of children’s reach
- ☐ Child-proof rooms

**Lighting and Ventilation**
- ☐ Natural lighting from outdoors
- ☐ Strong, built-in light fixtures
- ☐ Fresh air from windows
- ☐ Heating and cooling system

**Outdoor Play Areas**
- ☐ Relatively new outdoor climbing equipment
- ☐ Safe ground surfaces
- ☐ Enough room to run around

**Health and Hygiene**
- ☐ Clean eating and sleeping spaces
- ☐ Individual cribs, resting cots or mats
- ☐ Smoke-free environment
- ☐ Secure trash receptacles
- ☐ Children and staff wash hands before and after meals
- ☐ Staff wears gloves when changing diapers

**Indoor Play Areas**
- ☐ A variety of spaces for different uses
- ☐ Quiet space for resting or relaxing
- ☐ Adequate room for some physical activity
- ☐ Enough toys for everyone, with multiples of the most popular toys
- ☐ Comfortable indoor spaces conducive to reading
- ☐ Enough books for everyone
- ☐ Appropriate arts and crafts supplies
- ☐ Children’s artwork displayed

[Continued on next page.]
# Care Center Visit Checklist

### QUESTIONS TO ASK WHILE THERE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is a typical day like?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are your discipline policies?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you handle toilet training?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do the kids watch TV or DVDs? How much? What type?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you handle nap time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I visit any time?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IF IT SEEMS APPROPRIATE, DISCUSS THE FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the payment schedule?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my child is sick or on vacation, do I still have to pay?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What sibling discounts do you offer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What financial aid, scholarships, and/or sliding scale prices do you offer?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Post-Visit Notes

How did you feel when you left the facility? An important question: If you were a child, would you want to play there?
**Parent-Provider Contract**

**Name of child:**

- Care for the above-mentioned child will be provided on (specify days of the week) _________ from the hours of _________ a.m. to _________ p.m.
- Payment for the services rendered above is due _________ times per month, on ______________.
- Payment will be at a rate of $_________ per hour / week / month.
- Payment will be made by: cash/credit card/check
- Late fees (for late pick-up or overtime care) will be paid at a rate of $_______ per ______.

**My Child’s Special Needs**

- Medications:
- Other:
- My child is allergic to
- My child needs to nap at _________a.m./p.m. and ______a.m./p.m.

**Pediatrician’s contact info:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents will supply</th>
<th>Provider will supply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Diapers</td>
<td>☐ Diapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Wipes</td>
<td>☐ Wipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Change of clothes</td>
<td>☐ Change of clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Formula</td>
<td>☐ Formula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Breakfast</td>
<td>☐ Breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Lunch</td>
<td>☐ Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Snacks</td>
<td>☐ Snacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Dinner</td>
<td>☐ Dinner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Transportation</td>
<td>☐ Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Bedding</td>
<td>☐ Bedding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE CAN PICK UP MY CHILD** [Also specify if there are any individuals who CANNOT pick up the child.]

1.

2.

3.

**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, PLEASE CALL**

1.

2.

3.
# Backup Care Planning Sheet

Planning for back-up child care will save a lot of time and frustration. Child care arrangements, regardless of how reliable they are, will break down at some point. Below is a work sheet to help you plan for the worst, but hope for the best.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>When My Child Is Sick</th>
<th>When My Child Care Arrangement is Unavailable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Personal Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>My Community Resources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alternatives Provided By My Employer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Camp Checklist

Day Camp

1. Who operates the camp?
2. How many weeks is the camp program in operation?
3. Is transportation provided?
4. What is the cost of the program?
5. What types of activities are offered?
6. Who conducts the activities with the children?
7. What are the qualifications and ages of the staff members?
8. How many people on the staff are certified in First Aid/CPR and/or life saving?
9. How many and how old are the children in the program?
10. What is the counselor-to-child ratio?
11. What is a typical day like?
12. What are the emergency/first aid procedures?
13. How are swimming activities and field trips supervised?
14. Is the camp ACA (American Camping Association) accredited, if not why not?
15. What are the goals and mission of the camp?

Overnight Camp

1. What are the sleeping accommodations?
2. What kind of overnight supervision is there?
3. What are the bathroom and shower facilities like: Where are they?
4. Are there medical facilities?
5. What equipment will your child need?
6. Are children allowed to call home?
7. When are visiting times for the family?
8. Is the camp highly competitive or are children encouraged to hang out and relax?
9. Is the camp co-ed or single sex?
10. What kind of food is served?
11. What is the percentage of campers returning each year?

To locate licensed camps in your area go to:

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888-441-8674

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