



Child Care Resource Center

Parent's Guide to Finding Child Care

Vision:

Quality Care For
Every Child

Serving:

Tulsa, Creek,
Wagoner, and
Rogers counties
in Oklahoma

Phone: 1-918-834-2273
www.ccrctulsa.org

Child Care
RESOURCE CENTER

Policies and Disclaimer

- ☎ The Resource and Referral Department at the Child Care Resource Center hopes to educate and help parents find quality, affordable child care.
- ☎ We give referrals, not recommendations. The information we supply is to aid you in your search.
- ☎ The service we provide is a free and confidential service to help our communities and their families.
- ☎ If you have concerns about our services or about the services offered by child care providers, please ask about our complaint policies by calling us at 834-2273.
- ☎ Please give us a call back if you have any questions or need further assistance in finding child care. We are here to help!



Dear Family,

Thank you for calling The Child Care Resource Center. We hope that the referrals and information were helpful. Choosing a child care provider is a decision best made by you. *We may be contacting you within the next six weeks to see if you were able to find childcare.* **If you need more information on child care or more referrals, please call us again.**

Choosing Care

Choosing good child care is important. Visit different programs to decide which program is best for you and your child. We suggest that you:

- ◆ Interview possible child care providers
- ◆ Check references
- ◆ Make unscheduled visits
- ◆ Ask questions important to you
- ◆ View complaints and violations at DHS Licensing Division

Your Resource and Referral Staff

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Hispanic Resources

Necesitas ayuda para encontrar cuidado para tus hijos?

Nosotros te podemos ayudar!

A encontrar Cuidado Infantil de Calidad y de acuerdo a las *necesidades específicas* de tu familia.

Nuestro servicio es GRATIS

Llámenos al:

1-918-831-7299 A nuestra línea en español

1-888-962-2772 A nuestra línea gratis



Oklahoma Child Care
RESOURCE & REFERRAL ASSOCIATION, INC.

Asociación de Recursos y Referencias para
el Cuidado de Niños de Oklahoma



JOIN PARENT CENTRAL TODAY!

Parent Central is *the* online place for resources and information about issues affecting children and families. Get connected and become part of a growing network of concerned parents. Over 20,000 parents have already joined! If you have a child under age 8, you don't want to miss this opportunity.

With Parent Central, you can:

- Receive the monthly e-newsletter, the Parent Central Express
- Stay informed about news and resources in the community from Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association
- Be a part of a growing network of parents who care about children in this country

Find out more and sign up today at:

<http://highqualitychildcare.org/okccrra/home.html>

Community Child Development and Parenting Resources

Oklahoma is working to establish 2-1-1, a non-emergency assistance phone line you may call when you need help locating resources.

Call 2-1-1 or go to www.211tulsa.org. You can dial 2-1-1 for help 24 hours a day, every-day. A trained service specialist will help link you with the services you need. Bilingual service specialists and interpreter services are available to accommodate virtually any language.

Additional Community Resources

- SoonerCare for children under the age of 18 based on income, age, and citizenship.
- 1-800-987-7767
- Food Stamps for low income families who work full time. Example: a family of three with a gross income of \$1,907 a month qualify for Food Stamps. 1-866-411-1877
- Child Support can help custodial parents obtain child support payments from absent parents. 1-800-522-2922
- Supplemental Security Income is available for children with permanent disabilities.
- 1-800-772-1213
- Child abuse occurs when a child has been abused or neglected or in danger of being abused or neglected. Reporting child abuse is mandated by law. 1-800-522-3511

Do you work? Do you have children?



TAX CREDITS CAN SAVE YOU THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS!

You could qualify for thousands of dollars for your family from federal and state tax credits for earned income, children and dependents, and child care. You must file a tax return whether you owe income taxes or not in order to collect these credits.

- Advanced Earned Income Tax Credit
- Earned Income Tax Credit
- Child and Dependent Care Credit
- Child Tax Credit

For more information, and to find out where to get free tax preparation assistance, call the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-829-1040 or the Oklahoma Tax Commission at 1-800-522-8165. For more detailed information online, go to www.cbpp.org (under EITC Outreach) or www.nwlc.org (under Tax Policies).

OTHER ASSISTANCE

Sliding Scales:

Some providers may set fees based on income or offer discounts to parents who meet certain qualifications (such as a student or single working mother).

Employer Sponsored Cafeteria Plans:

Some companies offer a plan in which you may set aside a certain amount of your income to pay for child care. This money is tax free. Ask your benefits representative about Dependent Care Assistance Plans (DCAP).

Head Start, Early Head Start, and Pre-Kindergarten Programs are available to families who meet the income criteria (see Types of Care).

Child Care Financial Assistance

State Assistance- If you have difficulty in affording the cost of quality child care, you may qualify for assistance with these expenses. Please contact the DHS Family Support Services in the county where you reside to determine eligibility for assistance with child care costs.

Tulsa County	1-918-581-2401
Creek County	1-918-746-3300
Wagoner County	1-918-614-5000
Rogers County	1-918-283-8300
OK Dept of Human Services	1-888-521-2278

Tribal Assistance- Native American families may qualify for assistance through their tribe.

Creek	918-758-1463
Delaware Tribe of Indians	918-337-6502
Osage Nation	918-287-5432
Iowa Tribe of Oklahoma	405-547-2402
Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma	918-762-3621
Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma	580-762-8104
Tonkawa Tribe of Oklahoma	580-628-2561
Cherokee Nation	918-453-5000
Shawnee Tribe	918-542-2441
Choctaw	580-924-8280

AVERAGE COST OF CARE

TULSA COUNTY AVERAGE COST OF WEEKLY FULL TIME CARE

Age Group	Family Home Care	Center	Large Family Home Care	Total children
0-12 months	114.00	154.00	120.00	
13-23 months	111.00	143.00	117.00	
24-35 months	104.00	134.00	106.00	
36-47 months	97.00	125.00	102.00	
48-60 months	94.00	118.00	96.00	
61+ months	91.00	103.00	86.00	

CREEK COUNTY AVERAGE COST OF WEEKLY FULL TIME CARE

Age Group	Family Home Care	Center	Large Family Home Care	Total Children
0-12 months	108.00	122.00	111.00	
13-23 months	101.00	109.00	109.00	
24-35 months	98.00	99.00	104.00	
36-47 months	98.00	92.00	97.00	
48-60 months	97.00	85.00	96.00	
61+ months	97.00	71.00	85.00	

AVERAGE COST OF CARE

WAGONER COUNTY AVERAGE COST OF WEEKLY FULL TIME CARE

Age Group	Family Home Care	Center	Large Family Home Care	Total Children
0-12 months	118.00	146.00	118.00	
13-23 months	111.00	138.00	113.00	
24-35 months	106.00	124.00	107.00	
36-47 months	102.00	117.00	104.00	
48-60 months	97.00	112.00	97.00	
61+ months	93.00	96.00	89.00	

ROGERS COUNTY AVERAGE COST OF WEEKLY FULL TIME CARE

Age Group	Family Home Care	Center	Large Family Home Care	Total Children
0-12 months	108.00	132.00	100.00	
13-23 months	105.00	114.00	95.00	
24-35 months	98.00	103.00	90.00	
36-47 months	97.00	97.00	90.00	
48-60 months	94.00	88.00	90.00	
61+ months	85.00	78.00	70.00	

Preparing for Your Child Care Search

The following are suggestions to assist you in beginning your child care search. You will want to be thorough in your interviewing of potential providers.

1. **Learn all you can about child care and how to identify quality care.** Start on pages 14 for information on important factors. Make a list of the things that are important to you and ask your referral specialist to look for those factors in the search.
2. **Gather a list of potential providers.** Contact Resource and Referral at 834-2273 and then press “1” for a listing of providers in your area. Be sure to inform the referral specialist of what you need. This may include the days and hours of care, what type of care you prefer, and specific needs of you child (no pets, a provider who will take a child with certain medical needs, etc).
3. **Contact providers on the list.** Remember that early mornings, late afternoons and lunchtime are very busy times for child care providers. Calling at other times may offer you the opportunity to visit in greater depth with the provider. Screen providers thoroughly and ask potential providers for an appointment time when they are free to take time to answer questions you explain policies and expectations, as well as listen to yours.
4. **Visit providers that you are interested in.** Be sure to ask if they have an “open door policy”, look around the environment carefully for safety hazards and ask the provider to describe an average day. Be sure to ask about discipline practices. Also inquire regarding turnover and caregiver education. Ask for references as well.
5. **Check out the references you are given.** Knowing how other parents feel about the care their children received can help you assess the quality of care given. Call and visit with other parents who have used the provider.

6. **Call your local DHS licensing worker** (list on page 21) and set up an appointment to view the “Summary of Facilities Monitoring.” Only the DHS licensing worker can share information about child abuse or neglect allegations. They can also interpret the monitoring report for you so that you will know how compliant the provider is.
7. **Take your child to visit the provider you think is the right choice.** Your child will be the one spending time in the environment. Make sure that he or she is comfortable in that setting before making a commitment. Carefully observe the provider’s interaction with the children in their care, as well as your child’s interaction with the provider. Above all, trust your instincts. If you feel something is not right, check it out.
8. **Carefully review the provider’s policies.** The provider should have a written handbook or materials with his or her policies and procedures. Be sure you understand what will happen in the event of a natural or man-made disaster or other emergency. You will want to know what the provider's policy is regarding vacations, sick days, and late fees.
9. **Make your decision.** Keep this information for reference should your care needs change or you wish to use a different provider.
10. **Stay involved.** Licensed providers are monitored three times a year. You have the opportunity to observe and communicate with the caregiver on a daily basis. Do this for you child!

What you can do to stay involved:

- Talk with your child about his/her day at child care
- Talk with the provider about your child’s day
- Make an occasional drop-in visit to the child care
- Check the “Summary of Facilities Monitoring” report that is posted on a regular basis
- Observe your child’s interactions with the provider and peers
- Volunteer to assist with field trips, valentine’s parties, etc.

Types of Care

There are many types of child care available in Oklahoma. Your child's age, the hours and days you need and your personal preferences will determine which type of care is best for your family.

Child Care Centers

In Child Care Centers, children are generally in groups with other children their own age. These include:

Regular Centers:

More than 30 hours per week full and part days. These are licensed facilities.

School-aged Care:

Before and after-school care for children over the age of five. Some of these are licensed while others may be exempt.

Drop-in Centers:

Occasional care for children no more than six hours per day and 24 hours per week. These facilities must be licensed if parents are not on the premises (as in work-based facilities).

Part-day Programs:

Care for children between 15 and 30 hours per week. These include Mother's Day Out and preschool programs. Programs operating less than 15 hours per week are license exempt.

Family Child Care Homes

Family Child Care Homes are just that, a home where the caregiver (called a provider) cares for children of various ages. There are two types of Family Child Care Homes:

Regular Family Child Care Homes

A home setting in which the provider may care for up to seven children. They are licensed and monitored by DHS.

Large Family Child Care Homes:

A home setting in which the provider may care for up to twelve children. Depending on the ages of the children, they may be required to have more than one caregiver present in the home. These must also be licensed and are monitored.

Other Types of Care

Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Programs:

In Oklahoma, public pre-kindergarten is available to children four years of age at no charge to the parents. Care is usually provided at the school. Some schools offer half-day Pre-K classes, while others offer full-day Pre-K. Although Pre-K is free, there is usually a charge for before- and after-school care. These programs are licensed exempt.

Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start and Early Head Start are licensed exempt, federally funded programs that offer free child care to families who meet eligibility. Most, but not all, families who are eligible have incomes that meet federal poverty guidelines.

Summer Camps

Summer camps are part or full day programs usually run by Camp Fire or YMCA. Some may be licensed.

Nanny/In-Home Care

Nanny-placement agencies and in-home caregivers are not regulated by the state. The family employs, supervises, and is responsible for meeting wage and hour requirements as well as payroll taxes.

Relative Care

Care that is provided by a relative of a child is not regulated by the state. The family holds responsibility for supervision.



Factors to Consider in Choosing Child Care

In selecting quality child care for your child, there are many things to consider. Oklahoma has a system which regulates child care programs and provides monitoring through the Department of Human Services. Understanding this system can help you make an informed choice regarding the care of your child.

Licensed Programs:

A licensed program is one in which the provider must apply for and meet criteria from the Department of Human Services in order to be a DHS licensed child care facility. A licensed provider must:

- Pass inspections at least 3 times per year
- Comply with limits on the number of children in care
- Complete training of at least 12 clock hours per year including CPR and First Aid
- Meet DHS health and safety requirements

It is the law that all care MUST be licensed unless it meets the exemptions noted below.

Licensed Exempt Programs:

An Exempt program is one in which the provider is exempt from licensing requirements and includes care:

- In a child's own home or by relatives
- On an informal occasional basis (such as babysitting)
- Drop-in programs where parents are on the premises and accessible, such as a church nursery
- Single activity programs such as dance lessons
- 15 hours per week or less such as Mother's Day Out

Selecting Quality Care for Your Child

There has been a great deal of research in the child care field to identify what best indicates good quality child care.



There have been six factors identified as most important in a child care setting. They are:

Group Size
Ratio
Stars Ratings and Accreditation
Parent Involvement
Caregiver Education
Turnover
Health & Safety

Group Size refers to the total number of children in a group. It is important to ask how many children are in a group. Limits vary with settings, but you should never see more than 12 children in a home setting. In centers it depends upon the age of the group. The younger the children, the fewer allowed in the group.

Ratio refers to how many children are allowed per caregiver. In a home setting, an individual caregiver may be allowed to watch between 7 and 12 children, depending on their licensing type and the ages of the children. In a child care center, the numbers of children per each provider increases with the age of the group.

Adult to Child Ratio and Group Size

There are specific rules about how many children a provider may care for at one time. This is important to make sure that your child is safe and getting the one-on-one attention that he or she needs.

Because children generally do better in small groups, the maximum group size is also regulated. This is most important for babies and young children who need to know that the same person will be there every day and give him what he needs. Ratio and group size vary depending on the type of care.

When you are looking for a child care, be sure to ask how many children there are for each adult. You want your child to get lots of individual attention. Also ask about the total number of children that are in the home or the group that your child will be in at a center. Smaller groups are usually calmer and more safe.

Child Care Centers	Staff-child ratio	Maximum group size
Infants (up to 12 months)	1:4	8
Toddlers (12 to 23 months)	1:6	12
Two-year olds	1:8	16
Three-year olds	1:12	24
Four & five-year olds	1:15	30
Six-years olds & over	1:20	40



Group Size and Ratio

Family Child Care Homes			
# adult caregivers	# of children under 2 years	# of children 2 years and over	Total # of children
1	0	7	7
1	1	6	7
1	2	5	7
1	3	3	6
1	4	1	5
1	5	0	5
2	3	4	7
2	4	3	7
2	5	2	7
2	6	1	7
2	7	0	7

Large Family Child Care Homes			
# adult caregivers	Total # of children	Ages of children	Staff-child ratio
1	5	Any age	1:5
1	6	No more than 3 under age 2	1:6
1	7	No more than 2 under age 2	1:7
1	7	All age 2 and older	1:7
1	8	All age 3 and older	1:8
1	10	All age 4 and older	1:10
1	12	All age 5 and older	1:12
2	8	All under age 2	1:4
2	12	No more than 6 under age 2	1:6
3	12	No more than 8 under age 2	1:4

STARS Ratings and Accreditation

Oklahoma has a rating system for child care facilities called ***Reaching for the Stars***. All licensed child cares begin as a “one star”. They can remain at that level or earn more stars by increasing their education and meeting certain criteria. Stars is an excellent indicator of provider effort and training, but parents should remember that it is not the only indicator or a guarantee of quality care.

In a **One-Star** Center or Home, the caregiver has a minimum of a GED or High School Diploma and has met minimum licensing requirements.

One-Star Plus Centers:

Directors must have 40 clock hours education per year
 Staff must have 20 clock hours per year
 Weekly lesson plans
 Daily/weekly care sheets to communicate with parents

One-Star Plus Homes:

Providers must have 20 clock hours education per year
 Assistants must have 20 clock hours education per year
 Must follow daily schedule
 Read to the children a minimum of 15 minutes per day
 Encourage parent involvement

Two-Star Centers and Homes:

Master teachers must have certification or 30 college credit hours (12 of those in early childhood development)
 There must be one master teacher for every 20 children
 Complete an Environment Rating Scale every 2 years
 Utilize parent/staff surveys

Three-Star Centers and Homes:

Meet all requirements of One-Star and Two-Star
 Be accredited by a National Organization such as NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children), NAFCC (National Association for Family Child Care) or others.



Parent Involvement

As a parent, you are the best safeguard for your child. Stay informed of what is happening in the life of your child, especially when he or she is in the care of someone else. Make sure that the provider you choose has an open door policy, allowing you to visit at anytime. Ask whether the provider communicates what went on that day with your child. Most centers and many homes give parent daily papers showing what happened in the child's day, including sleeping, eating, and toileting. If a provider is reluctant to give you information or allow you access to your child, it could be a red flag, so look for these indicators before you leave your child with anyone.

Other information you may want to know:

- How long the child care has been in business
- How much does the provider talk to the children
- How much experience the provider has had
- How the provider handles discipline
- How much time your child will be in front of the television
- The daily routines of the child care
- What learning opportunities will be taking place
- Sleeping, eating and play schedules

Caregiver Education

You will want to know how much training in child care the person who will be taking care of your child has had. Ask questions to be sure your provider is knowledgeable and qualified to care for your child.

Oklahoma has minimum requirements for any provider to be licensed. They include passing a background check, being alcohol and drug free, maintaining a safe environment for children, and completing education requirements in child development and health and safety. That means taking classes in CPR & First Aid, disease and injury prevention, use of a fire extinguisher, safeguarding the home and car seat safety. They must also learn about child development, behavior and guidance and reporting child abuse.

Turnover

Research has repeatedly shown that children do best when they are in stable, loving environments. Caregivers who come and go make it difficult for your child to feel secure. **Children do best when they stay with the same caregiver for at least a year.** That is why it is so important that you thoroughly interview caregivers to be sure that the choice you make will be the right one.

Information you may want to know:

- How long the caregiver has been in the same program or providing care in the home
- Does the provider plan on continuing care here in the future

You may also want to ask how long the other children have been in care with the provider who will be caring for your child. This can indicate not only whether your child will have the opportunity for long-term relationships with peers, but may also indicate whether other parents have been pleased with the caregiver.

Health and Safety

The health and safety of your child is the most crucial factor in selecting child care. You will want to inform the provider of any concerns or special needs your child has and find out whether the provider has had the training and experience to meet those needs.

What you need to know:

- That the home is clean and safe for your child
- The provider has a plan in case of emergencies
- The policy for when a child or the provider is ill
- Hand washing, toileting and diapering are frequent and thorough
- The outdoor play area is safe and clean
- There is enough room for play
- Babies sleep in clean beds on their backs
- Meals are prepared and stored in a safe, clean manner

Information About Providers

Before placing your child in care, it is recommended that you contact your DHS child care licensing worker and make an appointment to view licensing files in person. Licensing records are open to the public and enable you to see a history of the provider's inspections and any complaints that may have been filed.

Keep in mind that you are contacting the DHS licensing office that coincides with the **provider's zip code**. The offices are assigned by zip codes, therefore when calling an office you will need to look at the zip code list to determine which office to call. Parents or guardians need to contact the local DHS licensing office to set up a time to view the records or have them mailed to you once you have narrowed your child care search down to 2 or 3 possible providers. The numbers are as follows:

Wagoner 73	Wagoner	614-5000
Creek 19	Kellyville, Sapulpa, Sand Springs	224-9430
Rogers 66	Collinsville, Claremore, Owasso, Sperry, Tulsa 74108, 74116, 74117, 74134, Broken Arrow 74014	283-8300
Tulsa 72B	74103, 74106, 74110, 74114, 74119, 74120, 74126, 74127, 74130	430-2461
Tulsa 72C	74103, 74104, 74105, 74107, 74112, 74115, 74128, 74132, 74135, 74136, 74137, Jenks, Glenpool	581-2563
Tulsa 72G	74129, 74133, 74145, 74146 Broken Arrow 74011, 74012, Mounds, Bixby	294-5067

You can get some information online at www.okdhs.org child care locator.

When Would I Need Backup Care?

Resources

At the same time you set up your regular child care, begin to consider your options for backup care. Start right away. It is inevitable your child care will break down at some point. You may need to use a combination of options to provide care. Consider which of your relatives, friends or neighbors might be available to help you on an emergency basis. Talk to them about when it might be appropriate for you to call them. In some situations you may be able to find another parent who is willing to help you out in exchange for some weekend or evening hours.

Tips To Be Prepared

- Find more than one backup care arrangement.
- Visit as many potential backup child care arrangements as possible with your child.
- Keep a file of providers with their phone numbers and available hours.
- Have copies of paperwork such as birth certificates and immunization records ready.
- Organize a list and make extra copies of important family information such as phone numbers and addresses, your child's allergies, sleep patterns, and favorite activities.
- Complete preregistration materials for programs that require advance paperwork.
- Know your employer's policies around your taking time off from work.

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The Daily Parent is published 4 times a year. The *Daily Parent* is prepared by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, Washington, DC and funded by the Citigroup Foundation. If you would like to order past issues, visit Child Care Aware's web site www.childcareaware.org or call 202-393-5501 ext. 113.

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