

# Parent Guide

TO FINDING HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE  
IN ONONDAGA & CAYUGA COUNTIES



**CHILD CARE SOLUTIONS**

*navigating the way to high quality child care*

2022



Dear Parents of Onondaga & Cayuga County,

Welcome to the Child Care Solution's "Parent Guide to Choosing High Quality Child Care." Whether you are a parent of an infant, toddler or school age child; choosing child care is one of the most important and often difficult decisions you will make. This guide is designed to provide you with unbiased information to help you evaluate your options and assist you in choosing the child care setting that best meets the needs of you and your child.

Inside this guide you will find descriptions of the type of care available, tips for evaluating the quality of care, figures on the average cost of care in your county, and information about financial aid and other community resources available to assist your family and support your child's healthy development.

In addition to this guide, our Parent Services Specialists are here to assist you by providing information regarding child care programs, community resources and parenting via consultation and referrals. They are available in-person, over the phone, or on-line to provide personalized referrals to New York State regulated child care providers and programs in Onondaga and Cayuga Counties that may meet your family's needs. Unlike other referral services that are advertised on-line or on TV; our Parent Services Specialists are experts in child care, they are members of and knowledgeable about the communities that they serve, and their services are always free.

Please feel free to call us, stop into our offices, or visit us on the web. We're here to answer your questions, and we'd love to hear your feedback to help us improve our services.

Thank you for choosing Child Care Solutions.

Lori Schakow  
Executive Director

Call: 315 • 446 • 1220 ext. 303  
Toll Free: 888 • 729 • 7290 ext. 303

Web: [www.childcaresolutionscny.org](http://www.childcaresolutionscny.org)  
Email: [parenthelp@childcaresolutionscny.org](mailto:parenthelp@childcaresolutionscny.org)

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100 North St • Auburn, NY • 13021 • T-F • 8:30-4:00



Visit Child Care Solutions on Facebook, Pinterest, and Twitter!

\*It is important to know that this team does not monitor or inspect programs or providers. The information they provide is for referral purposes only and is not a recommendation. Their services can not replace your responsibility as a parent to inspect, evaluate and monitor the quality of the care you choose.

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### Our Mission

Building excellence in early care and learning systems while advancing equal access for all children in our community.

We accomplish this through education, advocacy, and support for families and early childhood professionals.

### Our Vision

Every child is cared for in a high quality, safe and nurturing environment that cultivates healthy development, early learning and joy.

When children feel safe and secure and get lots of individual attention, that is the mark of high quality child care. A safe, loving, stimulating environment is important. But children also need a place that supports their learning and development so they can reach their full potential and be ready for success.

The first 5 years of a child's life are critical to their development. High quality child care will help ensure that children are ready for school & ready to learn.



# Child Care Solutions Resource & Referral Policies

## Referral Fee Policy

Child Care Solutions' Parent Referral Specialists can help you find and choose child care that best meets your needs and the needs of your child. There are no fees associated with this referral process.

## Confidentiality Policy

All information given to Child Care Solutions is confidential and is only used to help locate potential providers that fit a families' needs, identify other resources that may be helpful and in blind statistical reporting for our agency and some of our funding sources.

## Disclaimer Policy

Any provider names that are given to callers are **referrals** only. They are not recommendations. The average weekly cost of full time care varies depending on the type of setting and the age of your child.

## Complaint Policy

Child Care Solutions believes that good child care is a community resource that supports families, contributes to economic productivity, and nurtures children's growth. If you have a comment or complaint against a Child Care Solutions staff member, please contact our Asst. Director, Shannon Gillen at (315)446-1220 ext.307 or the Executive Director, Lori Schakow at (315)446-1220 ext. 310. Call toll free at (888)729-7290.

## Commitment to Our Values

We are committed to activities, positions and goals that positively impact children's lives. We are responsive, professional and caring in our interactions with parents, providers and each other.

### If You Would Like To Check Compliance History Or Have A Comment Or Complaint About A Child Care Program, Please Contact:

Child Care Solutions: (315) 446-1220, Monday-Friday 8:30AM - 4:30PM  
(For Family Day Care Providers and School-Age Programs located in Onondaga County)

or

NYS Office of Children and Family Services: 1-800-732-5207 or 315-423-1202, Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-5:00 PM  
or [www.ocfs.state.ny.us](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us)

(For Day Care Centers, Group Family Day Care and Family Day Care Providers in Onondaga and Cayuga Counties)

## Community Resources

If you need information on other resources in our community you can call 211 and speak with an information and referral specialist 24/7 or visit [www.211cny.com](http://www.211cny.com).

For information on the following community resources dial 211 from your cell phone or landline. If you have trouble connecting you can dial an alternate toll-free number: 1-844-445-1922.

- Housing Resources
- Utility Resources
- Family Resources
- Food Resources
- Mental Health Resources
- Substance Abuse Resources
- Health Resources
- Transportation Resources
- Finances
- Financial Resources
- Household Items
- Disaster Resources
- Legal Resources
- Employment & Education Resources
- Volunteer Resources
- Government Resources
- Military Resources

### Please visit:

[www.ongov.net](http://www.ongov.net) for a complete list of agencies in Onondaga County or  
[www.co.cayuga.ny.us](http://www.co.cayuga.ny.us) for a complete list of agencies in Cayuga County

For more information on other resources for parents you can visit our website at [www.childcaresolutionscny.org](http://www.childcaresolutionscny.org) or:

New York's Early Care & Learning Council  
[www.earlycareandlearning.org](http://www.earlycareandlearning.org)

Child Care Aware of America  
[www.childcareaware.org](http://www.childcareaware.org)



# Types of Child Care

*What types of child care are available?*

*How many children can one person care for?*

*Is all child care regulated? What does that mean?*

**Don't Be Confused...**

**Let Us Help You Navigate Your Way To High Quality Child Care!**

Every parent has different preferences and opinions when it comes to child care. Perhaps you think your child would like to be in a child care center with other children their age. Maybe you want your child to be cared for in a more home-like setting. Some parents prefer to have friends or relatives care for their children.

Because all children are unique and have different needs and personalities, there is not a one size fits all answer for child care. The descriptions on pages 4-6 will help you understand of the types of regulated and non-regulated child care programs in New York State. Regulated programs are required to meet minimum health, safety, nutrition and training standards. However, just because a program is regulated does not guarantee it is a high quality program. **Look for the quality indicators on pages 11-12 to learn what high quality care looks like.**



## 1. Family Day Care Homes

Some parents choose family child care because it offers their children a home-like environment and they like having their children of different ages, together in the same group. Care occurs in an occupied residence.

In New York State we have two types of regulated family child care. They are registered Family Child Care Homes and licensed Group Family Child Care Homes. You can find the definitions below. There are minimum health, safety and nutrition standards for both. NYS requires all registered/licensed family child care programs to complete background checks for providers and household members (18 & over). NYS requires providers to have pre-service and on-going training. Registered/licensed family child care programs are inspected prior to opening and random every year.

### 1a. Family Day Care Home

- Care is provided by 1 registered caregiver
- Care occurs in an occupied residence
- Can care for children ages 6 weeks - 12 years
- Registered by NYS Office of Children & Family Services.
- A registered family day care home may care for up to 8 children from 6 weeks old - 12 years old\*
- There must be one caregiver present for every 2 children less than 2 years of age

### 1b. Group Family Day Care Home

- Care is provided by a licensed caregiver and an assistant
- Care occurs in an occupied residence
- Can care for children ages (6) weeks - (12) years
- Licensed by NYS Office of Children & Family Services
- A licensed group family day care home may care for up to 16 children from 6 weeks old -12 years old\*
- There must be one caregiver present for every 2 children less than 2 years of age
- Two caregivers must be present when more than 6

\* The maximum # of children cared for is based on the ages of the caregiver's own children and the ages of those they serve.

## CONTACT US

Call: 315 • 446 • 1220 ext. 303  
Toll Free: 888 • 729 • 7290 ext. 303

Website: [www.childcaresolutionscny.org](http://www.childcaresolutionscny.org)  
Email: [parenthelp@childcaresolutionscny.org](mailto:parenthelp@childcaresolutionscny.org)

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## 2. Day Care Centers

Day care centers care for children in groups defined by the age of the children. Centers are licensed and regulated by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services (OCFS). Because they are regulated by NYS they are required to meet minimum health, safety, nutrition and caregiver training standards. NYS requires background checks on all staff members at child care centers. Every licensed child care center must be inspected at least once annually.

Some parents choose centers because they believe that larger groups, multiple caregivers and state inspections make programs safer for their children and make the arrangement more dependable. Centers have more staff, space, equipment, toys and organized activities which some parents prefer.

- Care is provided by multiple caregivers
- Care occurs in a facility separate from a residence
- Can care for children ages (6) weeks - (12) years
- Licensed by NYS Office of Child & Family Services
- Children are typically divided by age group

The maximum # of children allowed in a group at a center is dependent on the age of the children served as is the minimum # of caregivers in a group. See the table below for

Maximum Group Size & Child To (1) Adult Ratio

	6wks- 18 mos	18 mos- 36 mos	3 yrs	4 yrs	5 yrs	6-9 yrs	10-12 yrs
Group Size	8	12	18	21	24	20	30
Ratio	4:1	5:1	7:1	8:1	9:1	10:1	15:1

## 3. Family, Friend & Neighbor Care

Some parents choose a relative, friend or neighbor to provide child care. These programs are not subject to health, safety and training standards unless they care for children who receive government child care subsidies. They are exempt from regulation because of the number of children in care (2 non related children) or because the caregiver is a relative of the child. Some parents use this type of care because it best meets their schedules, transportation needs, and or their budgets.

- Care is provided by a relative or non relative of the family
- Care can occur in the child's home or the provider's home
- Can care for up to (2) non-related children\*
- There is no maximum number of children allowed when all are related to the caregiver
- If care is provided for relatives & non relatives the maximum number of children allowed is 8 (2 non related)\*
- Caregiver's own children are not counted in the total number of children allowed.

\*This number is applicable when care exceeds 3 hours per day and occurs in the caregiver's home. If a program is caring for more than 2 non-related children more than 3 hours per day they are must be registered or licensed.

## 4. School Age Child Care

School age child care programs provide care for more than six (6) children ages 5-12 years, during non-school hours; may also provide care during school vacation periods and holidays. Background checks are required for all staff.

- Care occurs in a variety of settings such as elementary schools, churches, community centers and child care centers
- Can care for children ages (5) years - (12) years in a group setting.
- Registered by the NYS Office of Children & Family Services.

Maximum Group Size & Child To (1) Adult Ratio

	Kindergarten-9years	10 yrs-12 years
Group Size	8	12
Ratio	4:1	5:1

## 5. Hired Caregiver/Nanny

- Care is provided by an employee of the family in the child's home. The employer (parent) is required to meet minimum wage and other employee benefit requirements.
- Not regulated by the Office of Children & Family Services.

## 6. Early Childhood Education

**6a. Pre-Kindergarten:** A part-day NYS funded program run and housed by some school districts, and sometimes run and housed in a community early childhood program that can offer a full day option to children.

**6b. Nursery/PreSchool:** A program that serves children ages 3-5 years old in a variety of settings including, public & private schools, churches, community centers & home residences. Programs may meet anywhere from 1-5 days/week for less than 3 hours per session. They typically follow the school calendar year. Generally non-regulated and are not required to meet any specific requirements except for programs that voluntarily register with the NYS Department of Education.

**6c. Head Start/Early Start:** Federally funded programs for children that meet 4-5 days/week during the school year. Children must be at least 3 years old and not eligible to attend public school to attend Head Start. Early Head Start is a program that serves pregnant women, & families with children birth to 3 years, for part day or school day sessions and offers a variety of support services. Head Start encourages parent involvement through regular home visits, volunteering in the program and special activities. All Head Start/Early Head Start Centers are licensed by NYS Office of Children and Family Services and serve primarily low income families.

## 7. Camp Programs

**Camp Programs:** Day or overnight recreational programs that operate during the summer months and sometimes school breaks. Some programs are licensed by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services and some are regulated by the NYS Dept. of Health and must meet minimum health and safety requirements.

## Affording Child Care

Child Care Solutions knows working families want safe, high quality and affordable early care and education for their children. Unfortunately high quality child care can be expensive and out of reach for many families. Financial resources and benefits are available to help families manage the cost of child care.

**Financial Aid & Community Care Scholarships (see next page for details):** Working parents with incomes at or below certain guidelines may qualify for financial aid with their local county Department of Social Services. Onondaga & Cayuga Counties both offer financial aid for eligible parents to help cover the cost of child care. Residents of Onondaga County may also be eligible for Community Child Care Scholarships. The United Way of CNY funds Community Child Care Scholarships that can also help defray costs. If you have questions about either program please call Child Care Solutions at 315-446-1220 ext. 303 or toll free at 888-729-7290 ext. 303.

**Financial Assistance Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit:** If you paid someone to care for a child or a dependent so you could work, you may be able to reduce your tax by claiming the credit on your tax return. This credit is available to people who, in order to work or to look for work, have to pay for child care services for dependents under age 13. The credit is also available if you paid for care of a spouse or a dependent of any age who is physically or mentally incapable of self-care. The credit is a percentage, based on your adjusted gross income, of the amount of work-related child and dependent care expenses you paid to a care provider. The credit can range from 20 to 35 percent of your qualifying expenses, depending upon your adjusted gross income. For more information visit the website: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

**Earned Income Tax Credit:** The earned income credit is a refundable tax credit designed for lower income working families and individuals. The amount of the credit varies depending on your level of income and how many dependents you support. The tax credit can even generate a tax refund larger than the amount of tax paid in through withholding.

**Workforce Development Institute Child Care Subsidy (see next page for more details):** Are you struggling to pay for child care and are working full-time or nearly full-time? Workforce Development Institute Child Care Subsidy Facilitated Enrollment Program helps eligible working families apply for financial assistance. Enrolled families will receive income-based subsidies to help offset the high cost of childcare. For more information, visit the website: [www.wdiny.org](http://www.wdiny.org).

**Employer Programs:** Additional help with child care costs may be available through your employer. Inquire in your human resources or finance office to find out if any of the following benefits may be available:

**Dependent Care Spending Account:** Money is set aside from an employee's gross salary into a nontaxable spending account to pay for child care. Neither the employer nor the employee pays taxes on the amount of salary reduced for child care. The employee is thus able to pay for child care expenses with tax free dollars.

**Flexible Spending Plans:** Also called a "cafeteria plan", these programs allow employers to offer a range of benefits. Employees choose from a menu of benefits and customize their benefits package. For example, some employees may have health insurance provided by a spouse's employer and may choose a child care benefit instead.

**Child Care Vouchers or Reimbursements:** An employer may offer workers a child care allowance or subsidy that families can use toward a child care arrangement of their choice.

**Child Care Programs:** Additional assistance may be available from your child care program. Families are encouraged to ask their provider if any of the following apply.

- Sliding fee scale: fees for this scale are based on income standards set at the program.
- Negotiable Fees: Some programs might be willing to negotiate fees on an individual basis.
- Scholarships: Some programs offer scholarships/accept scholarship funds.
- Multi-child discounts: Some programs offer fee reductions to parents with more than one child enrolled in care.

**Head Start/UPK:** Some families may qualify for these no cost programs. Call Child Care Solutions at 315-446-1220 ext. 303 or toll free 877-729-7290 ext. 303 for more information.

**Military Families:** You may qualify for a Department of Defense Military Subsidy. For more information contact Child Care Aware at 1-800-424-2246 or email: [mssp@usa.childcareaware.org](mailto:mssp@usa.childcareaware.org)



# Average Cost of Child Care

## Cayuga County

Family Child Care		Group Family Child Care	
Infant (6 weeks - 18mos)	\$157.86	Infant (6 weeks - 18mos)	\$332.22
Toddler (19-35mos)	\$152.14	Toddler (19-35mos)	\$167.22
Pre-school (3-5yrs)	\$148.81	Pre-school (3-5yrs)	\$165.63
School Age (5-12yrs)	\$137.78	School Age (5-12yrs)	\$135.63
Child Care Centers		Child Care Centers	
Infant (6 weeks - 18mos)	\$215.00	Pre-school (3-5yrs)	\$192.50
Toddler (19-35mos)	\$203.00	School Age (5-12yrs)	\$182.50
School Age Child Care		School Age Child Care	
		School Age (5-12yrs)	\$140.00

## Onondaga County

Family Child Care		Group Family Child Care	
Infant (6 weeks - 18mos)	\$183.06	Infant (6 weeks - 18mos)	\$184.05
Toddler (19-35mos)	\$175.00	Toddler (19-35mos)	\$175.57
Pre-school (3-5yrs)	\$172.28	Pre-school (3-5yrs)	\$170.80
School Age (5-12yrs)	\$161.39	School Age (5-12yrs)	\$154.82
Child Care Centers		Child Care Centers	
Infant (6 weeks - 18mos)	\$278.25	Pre-school (3-5yrs)	\$235.41
Toddler (19-35mos)	\$256.96	School Age (5-12yrs)	\$185.11
School Age Child Care		School Age Child Care	
		School Age (5-12yrs)	\$146.09

## Let's face it. Child care is expensive! Help is Available

Help is available...Onondaga & Cayuga Counties both offer financial aid for eligible parents to help cover the cost of child care. The United Way of CNY funds Community Child Care Scholarships that can also help defray costs for families living in Onondaga County.. If you have questions about either program please call Child Care Solutions at 446-1220 ext. 303. or toll free at 888-729-7290 ext. 303.

### Financial Aid from Onondaga and Cayuga Counties

Gross Annual Income Limits			
Family Size	2	3	4
	\$34,840	\$43,920	\$53,000

#### For more information or to apply for assistance:

If you live in Onondaga County:  
Call Onondaga County Day Care Services at  
**(315) 435-5683**

If you live in Cayuga County:  
Call Cayuga County Day Care Services at  
**(315) 253-1446**

Parents must work 20 or more hours per week and have incomes below the gross annual income limits to qualify. Care can take place in a child care center, family child care home or with a trusted relative or friend.

### Community Child Care Scholarships

Onondaga County Gross Annual income Ranges			
Family Size	2	3	4
	\$54,930	\$69,090	\$83,250

Please call Child Care Solutions at **315-446-1220 ext. 303** or e-mail [Parenthelp@child-caresolutionscny.org](mailto:Parenthelp@child-caresolutionscny.org) for more information, an application, or a list of eligible programs for this scholarship.

Parents must work 30 hours per week and have incomes within these ranges to qualify. Scholarships are funded by the United Way of CNY.

### Workforce Development Institute Child Care Subsidy

Gross Annual Income Limits			
Family Size	2	3	4
	\$47,905	\$60,390	\$72,875

#### For more information or to apply for assistance:

Please call Child Care Solutions to help answer any of your questions at  
**(315) 446-1220**

If we cannot answer your questions, please call Workforce Development Institute at  
**(315) 426-0378**

Each parent in the household must work 25 hours per week and have incomes within these ranges to qualify. Also, all children must be under the age of 13.

# Plan For Finding High Quality Child Care

## 1. Call Child Care Solutions

- Call Child Care Solution's Parent Services Specialists for a list of registered and licensed programs that meet your needs.
- Be specific when you call. For example if your child has a pet allergy make sure we know.
- Discuss any questions or concerns you have with our team.

## 2. Call The Potential Program

- Ask if they have openings (state child's or children's age/ages).
- Ask questions on topics that are important to you (Use information from this referral packet as a guide).
- Arrange for an interview appointment with providers who may meet your needs.
- Arrange a time to visit during the day while children are in care.

## 3. Prepare Interview Questions To Ask

- Is the caregiver/program licensed or registered?
- How much experience and training does the caregiver/staff have?
- Is there frequent staff change and/or turnover?
- Is there a parent contract? What are the details of the contract?
- What is the expectation of payment for holidays, vacation and sick days (yours & theirs)?
- How does the program keep parents informed about their child's/children's day?
- Are there parent involvement opportunities (Such as field trips or special projects)?

## 4. Visit, Observe, And Interview

- Visit the program and interview either the child care center director or family caregiver. Bring our checklist (pgs. 10-11) of things to look for.
- Observe the interactions between children & caregivers.
- Observe the caregiver's/classroom routine while also observing the room.
- Take note of the area. Are the children well supervised? Are there enough toys? Are the toys age appropriate?
- Look for room safety. Are the outlets covered? Cabinets childproof?
- Obtain a copy of the provider's/program's contract and ask for references before you leave (perhaps current families and at least one family who no longer uses this program).

## 5. After The Visit

- Check references
- Read through the contract
- Contact the Office of Children & Family Services/Child Care Solutions & check the program's compliance history
- After you have narrowed down or chosen a program; you may want to bring your child in for a test run. Observe their interactions with the caregiver and other children.





# 7 Indicators of High Quality Child Care

## 1. Small Group Size & Low Caregiver to Child Ratios

Small group size and low teacher/child ratios are probably the best indicators for determining the quality of a child care program. Regulated programs must limit the number of children each adult cares for based on the standards set. These standards help to ensure children are properly supervised, safer and get the attention they need and deserve. Although safety is always forefront on every parents mind there are other benefits to small group size and low caregiver/child ratios. Caregivers in small groups spend more time interacting (responding, comforting, talking, listening, playing, reading etc.) with children. They are also more sensitive to children's needs, more actively involved in their care and tend to offer more developmentally appropriate activities. Research shows that children in small groups are not only safer, they also have better social skills, are more involved in activities, and less aggressive. One of the bigger benefits of small group size and low ratios is that caregivers and children have more opportunity to talk to each other. This increased communication is critical to developing children's language skills and school readiness.

## 2. Strong Parent/Provider Relationships

Quality child care programs respect and understand the importance of their relationships with parents. You should feel welcome at all times and be invited to participate in activities, field trips and special programs. You have the right to drop in at any time during business hours to observe or visit. There should be open communication with the caregiver on a regular (if not daily) basis. Parents should always feel comfortable when talking to their child care provider.

## 3. Consistent Relationships

Change is hard for most people. It can be especially difficult for young children. Getting used to new caregivers takes time and can be very stressful. That is why it is best if children stay with the same caregiver for at least one year. Quality programs are able to keep staff turnover to a minimum and have consistent relationships with children.

## 4. Caregivers Have Early Childhood Training

In your absence child care providers act as your child's protector and teacher. It is crucial that they are trained & educated in early childhood development. NYS regulated childcare programs/caregivers must receive ongoing training in such areas as health & safety, nutrition, child abuse & neglect and other child development areas to maintain their license/registration. We at Child Care Solutions know the importance a properly trained caregiver can make in the life of your child. We educate providers on everything from potty training, behavior, guidance, early literacy & learning through play. Quality programs make training like this a priority.

## 5. Program is Licensed or Registered

Legal child care programs have a license or are registered, with only a few exceptions. Programs that care for more than two non-related children for three hours or more per day must have a license or registration certificate. Staff of licensed and registered programs have background checks and are required to meet continuing education requirements. These programs are inspected to insure that they meet New York State's high health & safety standards. Pre-K programs meet NYS Department of Education standards. Summer camps may meet either Department of Health or NYS Office of Children & Family Services standards. When you visit a regulated child care program, ask to see the license or registration certificate.

## 6. Good Health & Safety Practices

Attention to basic health and safety factors is critical to high quality child care. NYS regulations require that all licensed and registered providers meet basic health & safety standards. Some things you should ask about include:

- Are the children seen and heard by the caregiver at all times? Even during nap time?
- Are feeding and sleeping schedules and/or toilet training addressed?
- Are nutritious meals provided? (Caregivers are allowed to have parents bring meals.)
- Does the site have a bathroom, wash area that is accessible to children? Does the program follow good hand washing and sanitation practices?
- Are there enough adults for the group size and ages of the children?
- Is the furniture and equipment clean, safe and in good condition?
- Is the site child-proofed: electrical outlets covered, stairways protected, childproof locks on cabinets, poisons kept away from children, hanging cords from blinds secured?
- Does the site have working fire & CO2 detectors and fire extinguishers?
- Is there an emergency/evacuation plan and are practice drills done with the children?
- Is there a working phone at the site? Are emergency numbers posted?
- Are caregivers MAT certified? (MAT certification or Medication Administration Training is required if your child needs to have certain medication on a regular basis for routine medical needs while in care.)

## 7. Accreditation

Accreditation is a system of recognition for child care programs/caregivers that meet very high quality standards. Accreditation is granted by national commissions such as NAEYC or NAFCC. Programs & caregivers that are accredited have met voluntary standards for child care that are higher than most state requirements. Accreditation is granted for a 5 year period. There are a limited number of accredited programs in Onondaga & Cayuga Counties.

# Choosing Quality Child Care Checklist



Bring this checklist with you when you visit potential child care providers. When you are prepared with the right questions it is easier to interview and select the right provider for your family.

## CHOOSING QUALITY CHILDCARE

At Child Care Solutions, we believe that you are the best person to choose a child care setting that will best meet the needs of your child. Choosing care can be difficult. It is important to carefully evaluate the program or family child care provider. We strongly suggest that you visit as many programs as possible. This will allow you to explore and compare the many options available. The following is a guide you may use while visiting and evaluating the child care setting.

Child Care Solutions referral service does not give recommendations, endorse or inspect any programs or providers listed for referral purposes.

Caregivers' Names				
1	2	3	4	5

### HEALTH & SAFETY:

Does the site have working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers?

Is there an emergency/evacuation plan and are practice drills done with the children?

Is the site child proof: electrical outlets covered, stairways protected, poisons kept away from children, guns locked in cabinets?

Is there a working phone at the site? Are emergency numbers posted?

Is the furniture and equipment safe and in good condition?

Are there first aid supplies available on site?

Does the site have a bathroom, wash area that is accessible to children?

Is the environment clean? (especially eating, diapering and bathroom areas)

Are good health habits such as washing hands before eating, after toileting or outside play practiced?

Are infants laid on their backs to sleep?

Is at least one care giver on site certified in medication administration, CPR, & First Aid?

### ENVIRONMENT:

Does the site have a safe place for infants to crawl and explore?

Is there space indoors for active play and outdoors for running, jumping, and climbing?

Does the site have separate spaces for quiet times like doing homework or naptime?					
Does the site have a space that is clean, bright and child friendly?					
Are there equipment and supplies on site to accommodate the needs of various ages: blocks, books, games, toys, creative art materials?					
Are children allowed to choose activities based on their own interests and abilities?					
Is reading to the children part of the daily activities? Do children watch TV? How much and what?					
<b>CAREGIVER:</b>					
Are there enough adults for the group size and ages of children?					
Does the caregiver attend trainings related to health and safety & child development?					
Does the caregiver provide individual attention to each child?					
Does the caregiver get down to the level of the children and engage in activities?					
Does the caregiver appear to be warm, loving, and nurturing?					
<b>POLICIES, PROCEDURES &amp; HANDBOOK</b>					
Is there a contract or handbook that explains policies & procedures:					
When your child or the provider is ill, various fees, hours of operation, and holiday & vacation schedule.					
For behavior issues and discipline.					
About feeding & sleeping schedules? Is toilet training discussed?					
Are nutritious meals provided? Does the provider participate in the CACFP food program?					
Are children transported for any reason? Who provides the car seats? Is there a written permission form?					
Are parents allowed to visit at any time?					
Are references provided?					
Will the program/provider share information regarding your child with you on a regular basis? And How?					

For further assistance we are available M-F 8:30 AM-4:30 PM & Tues until 7:00 PM: **(315) 446-1220 ext. 303 or 888-729-7290**. You can also email us at **ParentHelp@childcaresolutionscny.org** or visit our website at **www.childcaresolutionscny.org**.





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CURRENT RESIDENT OR:



#### Our Mission

Building excellence in early care and learning systems while advancing equal access for all children in our community.

#### Our Vision

Every child is cared for in a high quality, safe & nurturing environment that cultivates healthy development, early learning and joy.

#### Our Locations & Business Hours

**Auburn** 100 North Street, Suite 3  
Auburn, NY 13021  
Tuesday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

**Syracuse** 6724 Thompson Road  
Syracuse, NY 13211  
Monday - Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

**Main Phone** (315) 446-1220  
**Fax** (315) 446-2010

#### Parent Referrals

(315) 446-1220 ext 303

#### Toll Free

(888) 729-7290 ext 303

#### Website

[www.childcaresolutionscny.org](http://www.childcaresolutionscny.org)



## It's All About The Children

### Child Care Solutions does the work we do because of these core values:

- We are committed to activities, positions and goals that positively impact children's lives.
- We are responsive, professional and caring in our interactions with parents, providers and each other.
- We appreciate the diversity of our community's families and providers and respect their knowledge, experiences and choices.
- We are innovative, resourceful and willing to tackle difficult issues.
- We believe that we have a responsibility to the community to provide services that are accessible, effective and of high quality.

**If you hold these same core beliefs please consider supporting Child Care Solutions.**

To learn how to support our organization please call:

Executive Director, Lori Schakow: (315) 446-1220 ext. 310

Marketing & Fund Development Specialist: Hillary Kent: (315) 446-1220 ext. 315

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