

STARTING POINT FOR CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION



The Good Child Care Book

What Every Parent Needs to Know
About Quality Child Care



STARTING POINT FOR CHILD CARE AND EARLY EDUCATION



Dear Parents

You want the best for your child—and so do we.

That's why we've put together this Good Child Care Book—to help you choose a child care arrangement that meets your needs as working parents while it nurtures all aspects of your child's development.

Good child care is much more than babysitting. It is gently guiding children as they learn about themselves and the world around them. It is helping them master the skills and lessons of everyday life. It is nurturing their fast-growing minds and carefully handling the challenges of behavior, sickness and relationships—so they will grow into healthy, responsible and productive adults.

As parents, you will select your child care arrangement. But we can help. Here you'll find information on different kinds of child care and hints on what to look for to find a quality child care center or family child care home—plus child care checklists, tax credits and other important information. And you can call us direct for personal assistance with your child care search.

Remember, quality child care lasts a lifetime! Look for the good quality ribbons throughout this book for special hints on locating quality care.

Good luck,

The folks at Starting Point

Different kinds of child care

The first step in making the right child care choice is to figure out what kind of child care is best for you. There are three main forms of child care:

Child Care Center

A child care center is a place where many children are cared for and, where, like a small school, they are grouped by age. It is normally open all year round and has regular daytime hours. Many parents choose centers because of their larger staff, facilities, space, toys, equipment and planned activities.

To assure minimum standards, either the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services or the Ohio Department of Education regulates, licenses and inspects child care centers, preschool and schoolage programs. If a center is  accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, it means the center has measured up to national standards of quality care and has made a commitment to offering the high level of care, attention and stimulation every child deserves.

Family Child Care Home

A family child care home offers care in another person's home. The number of children is limited by law. Many parents prefer this type of care because they want their children in a more home-like environment. Family child care homes are especially popular for the care of infants and small children.

Family child care homes receiving public funds are licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services which requires child care training, health and safety inspections and criminal background checks. If a family child care home is  accredited by the National Association for Family Child Care Homes, it means the home has measured up to national standards of quality care and has made a commitment to offering the high level of care, attention, and stimulation every child deserves.

In Home Child Care

Here, a caregiver either lives in or comes to the family's home to care for the child, keeping the child in his or her normal surroundings, with familiar toys and routines. This is convenient for the family and offers flexibility. However, it is considerably more expensive, unless there are several children to be cared for.

Take the time to think about what kind of child care works best for you. *You need to be comfortable with the care your child is receiving*, you need to feel secure about your child care arrangement, and so does your child.

Special Needs Child Care

Children with medical, physical, developmental or emotional disabilities can be enrolled in some child care centers or family day care homes alongside other children. Here, they're cared for by specially trained teachers and have access to the community services and resources they need to learn and grow.



Child Care Center and Family Child Care Home Accreditation

 An accredited child care center or family child care home measures up to national standards of quality established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or the National Association of Family Child Care (NAFCC). That means they are committed to the highest standards of quality child care and have voluntarily submitted to a rigorous examination of their practices, staff and activities.

Care for Kids Family Child Care Homes

 A CARE FOR KIDS Family Child Care Home (Cuyahoga County only) is a home licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services whose caregivers are trained in child development, age-appropriate activities, and health and safety practices.

Step Up to Quality (SUTQ)

Step Up to Quality is a State of Ohio rating system that awards one to five stars to early childhood centers and family child care homes that meet high quality standards. The more stars, the higher the standards the program has achieved. Ratings are based on national research that identifies program benchmarks that lead to good outcomes for children—including child-to-staff ratios, staff qualifications, curriculum, environment and child and family interaction.

To find these centers and family child care homes, look for yard signs and banners that identify them as Step Up to Quality 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5-Star Award Winners.

The right kind of child care is important.

New information shows that the early care children receive has long lasting effects on their later life—and on how they develop, learn, deal with stress and handle their emotions.

[Babies and toddlers thrive when caregivers are warm, responsive and make them feel safe and secure.](#)

Science has recently found that the *brains of young children grow*—are actually wired—*when the children are given good nutrition, surroundings, care, stimulation and teaching*. The reverse is also true. Without adequate stimulation, a child's learning potential is seriously diminished. PET (positron emission tomography) scans actually show a smaller brain size among children who have been neglected or abused in their early years.

Children have also been found to withstand stress better when they have had a strong secure relationship with a nurturing adult in their early years.

A Child's Intellectual Development

Fifty percent of intellectual development takes place between birth and age four; and 33 percent of whatever academic skills children have attained at age 18 develops between birth and four.

Study by Dr. Benjamin Bloom, 1964

Discovery and Exploration

“Like miniature scientists, babies are sponges for information, learning through mini-experiments with pots and pans, and by playing peek-a-boo and other everyday games.”

*Dr. Andrew Metzoff,
University of
Washington*



Quality care makes a difference.

More and more, science is reinforcing the view that consistent, quality care is essential for normal growth and development.

In the first three years of life, *a child grows from a completely dependent being into one who walks, talks, plays and explores.* Given good care, a three year old is self-confident, trusting, inquisitive, able to communicate through language, physically and mentally healthy, able to relate well and be empathetic to others—all attributes that add up to a good start in life.

👤 Studies have found that the single most important factor in quality care is the relationship between the child and the caregiver. *Children who receive warm and sensitive care are more likely to trust people, enter school ready and eager to learn and get along well with other children.*

👤 The quality of this relationship, in turn, depends on the caregiver's personal qualities, education and training as well as the ratio of caregivers to children, the number of children in a group and maintaining stability in the child/caregiver relationship.

👤 Other indicators of quality programs are a strong focus on health and safety issues and on working closely with parents.

How to find quality child care

Selecting your child care arrangement is one of the most important decisions you will make—for your own peace of mind and for your child’s healthy development. So you’ll want to take the time to make a thorough search. Here are some suggestions.

Call.

Begin with a call to Starting Point at 1-216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971. This nonprofit agency keeps a long list of child care centers and homes throughout Northeastern Ohio. Although they cannot recommend one center or home over another, they can help you find care in your neighborhood or near your job. They can also give you the information you need to make a good choice.

Visit.

You’ll want to visit several child care centers or family child care homes. Initially, be sure to set up a time when you and your child or children can visit in advance. Make sure you keep your appointment, and be on time. Child care providers have a lot to do every day, and time is very important to them. When you are there, stay as long as you want to get a feeling for the place where your child will be spending so much time. Visit more than once so you’re all comfortable with your choice.

Observe.

When you do visit, trust your first impressions—they’re often on target. Is this a place where you’ll be comfortable leaving your child? Then, look and listen. Your eyes and ears will tell you a lot. Is this a safe place? Are the caregivers warm and responsive to the children. Do the caregivers seem to really care about the children, respond patiently to questions and discipline gently and fairly? On the following pages you’ll find some other things to look for.

Bring a Checklist.

You’ll find handy checklists in the pocket at the back of your brochure. Make copies and fill them out on your visits. This way you won’t have to rely only on memory, and you’ll have something concrete to use in comparing child care programs.

Check References.

Talk with other parents whose children are cared for at the centers or homes you are considering. Call and ask how they—and their kids—like the child care arrangement.

ten things to look for on your visit.

1 Are the children happy?

See if the children seem to enjoy going to child care. When there, they should feel like they are at home—easily playing and talking with others. Look for smiles and happy faces.

2 Are the children safe and secure?

For the child's well-being and yours, it's important to know that your child is in the care of a responsible person, that the center or family child care home is set up to avoid fire, accidents and other dangers, and that there is a clear plan to deal with emergencies and sickness. Look for smoke detectors, first aid supplies, safety measures, safe play areas, covered radiators and electrical outlets. Check that all dangerous items and substances are well out-of-reach. Make sure children cannot be released to anyone parents do not specify and are never left alone and unsupervised.

3 Are there enough teachers to give good care?

The fewer children each teacher has in her care, the more time she has to help each child learn and grow. That gives your child the good early start needed to do well in school and in life. The State of Ohio sets minimum standards for the number of children each teacher can handle. For higher quality care, look for lower teacher/child ratios.

4 Are the teachers loving and responsive?

First and most important, child care teachers should love the kids. When they do, you'll find they talk and play with the children. They respond quickly when they have problems, set limits gently, comfort them and meet their daily needs. Even discipline should be handled with love and understanding—by setting limits and offering consistent supervision.

5 Are the teachers well-qualified?

At the least, teachers should have some form of special training in

child care—particularly in child development, first aid, CPR, nutrition, behavior problems, health, safety and working with parents. Even better, look for professionals who have credentials, certificates or degrees in child development or early childhood education.

6 Do the activities lead to learning and development?

Just watching the children isn't enough. Make sure the teachers set goals for each child and plan things to do that are right for the children's ages? They should use creative materials, toys, books and help the children develop language and everyday skills. The teachers should talk, sing and read to the children, have daily routines for mealtimes, nap times and repeat pleasurable activities like special songs, rhymes and comforting words.

7 Is the place clean, pleasant and well-organized?

You want your child to be in bright, pleasant surroundings—as well as a

What about babies?

A good caregiver hugs, rocks, cuddles, responds to the baby's smiles, talks happily with the baby about what they see and do and introduces them to new objects and experiences.

place that's clean and large enough for indoor and outdoor activities, naps, meals and personal belongings. There should be at least 35 square feet of playroom floor space indoors per child and 75 square feet outdoors per child.

8 Are good health and nutrition practices followed? You'll want to be sure the place is clean, especially the bathrooms and diapering areas. Does everyone wash hands before serving, eating, bathroom visits and diapering? Is there a separate isolation area with adult supervision for mildly ill children? Does each child have an individual mat, cot or crib? Are counters, toys and equipment cleaned daily? Is the building warm enough in cold weather? Are meals and snacks well-balanced, nutritious, wholesome and geared to meet the nutritional needs of each age group?

9 Do teachers and parents work together for the child's well-being? Working well with your child's teacher is important to you and your child. You'll want to be able to share your child's day, talk over concerns and check your child's progress. Make sure you can stop in anytime. Be concerned if you're not allowed to come in anytime you like.

10 Do the child care costs, hours and policies match your needs? As a working parent, you don't want surprises. Make sure your center, home or in-home provider is affordable. Does she have hours that meet your workday needs? What happens when your kids are sick, have school vacations or emergencies? There should be written contracts and information on costs, handling sickness, vacations and emergencies.

Getting help with child care costs

Be sure to find out if you're eligible for tax credits from the IRS. You'll find information at the back of this book. If your income is low, see if your County Department of Job and Family Services can give you financial help.

A Good Child Care Program

- Offers a regular routine while allowing flexibility for the individual needs of the child;
- Has periods of quiet and active play as part of a well-balanced program;
- Offers a variety of experiences that allow each child to develop individual skills and self-confidence.

What to ask center or home providers

Chances are you'll think of lots of things to ask the center director or child care provider. It's a good idea to write your questions down—or make a copy of the suggested questions below—to be sure you remember them all.

- What kind of experience do you have caring for children?
- What kind of training have you had in early childhood development, first aid, CPR, nutrition?
- Who will be caring for my child?
- How many children does each caregiver handle?
- How long have your caregivers been with you?
- What kinds of indoor and outdoor activities do you have for kids who are my child's age?
- Who provides children's meals and snacks. Can I see a weekly menu?
- What is your daily routine? What kinds of activities do you offer?
- How will you make certain my child gets individual attention?
- What do you do if a child hits, bites another child, is uncooperative or has other problems requiring discipline?
- How do you soothe a child who is crying or upset?
- What is your approach to toilet training?
- Do you take children on field trips? Is permission required?
- What are the hours and days you offer care? What happens if I can't get there on time to pick up my child?
- What are your fees? When do I pay them? Are there any other fees?
- Do I have to pay if a child is absent or on vacation? Is there a discount if more than one child is enrolled?
- Do you have a backup provider to care for the kids if you are sick or have an emergency?
- What do you do if a child is sick, hurt or has an emergency? If my child's caregiver is sick? Does the caregiver have first aid and CPR training?
- What kinds of health and medical information do you require?
- Where do you keep medicines and cleaning products?
- How will you communicate with me about my child's progress?
- Do you encourage parents to be involved? If so, how are they involved?
- What are the phone numbers of other parents I can contact?

The Open Door Policy You have the right to drop into your child care center or family child care home unannounced—and see your child—anytime they're open.



What to ask yourself

Your visit is likely to give you a clear sense of whether or not it's the right place for your child. Remember your own feelings are your best guides. Ask yourself:

- Will my child fit in here?
- Do I like their approach to learning, play and discipline?
- Will my child be safe and secure in this setting?
- Can I easily talk with the staff about my child?
- Do I feel comfortable here?
- Is the location convenient for me?
- Do the costs, hours and policies meet my needs?

How to work with child care staff

Choosing child care is only the first step in a long relationship between the parents, child and caregiver. You'll want to stay involved to ensure your child gets the good quality care he or she deserves. The best care comes from a true partnership with the caregivers.

You'll want to prepare your child for the new child care arrangement. Talk about it, try to visit a few times before the child begins, and don't rush off on the first day. It takes awhile to get used to a new place and new people.

Tell the caregiver up front what you want for your child and communicate daily. You'll want to know how your child's day—and the caregiver's—went; what the children are learning and how your child is doing so you and the caregiver are on the same track. Volunteer to help if you can. Stop in unannounced and attend parent meetings and activities.

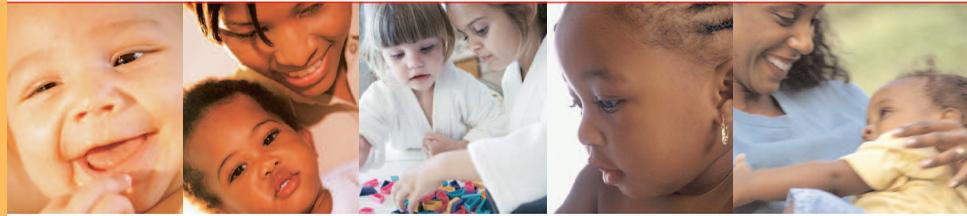
The more you work together, the better your child's care will be.

Period of Adjustment

After you've chosen your child care arrangement, you'll need time to adjust. And so will your child. So drop in and see how things are going. Is your child happy and excited when he sees his caregiver? Is your child comfortable with her? This is the best indication you have made a good choice.

If your child has a medical condition

Explain medical conditions, allergies and medications thoroughly to your caregiver and leave detailed written instructions.



Have a back-up plan for emergencies

You'll need to have at least two backups to handle child care when your regular child care arrangements break down, when your child—or the caregiver—is sick, on vacation, has an emergency, goes out of business, when schools are closed, etc.

It's a good idea to arrange in advance for spouses, relatives, temporary caregivers, drop-in centers or other backup sources to take care of children in these emergencies.

Keep a list of these backup providers, their phone numbers and available hours close to your phone.

Preregister with any backup child care providers who require advance paperwork, and keep a file handy with important phone numbers, family, medical and health information that you can bring with your child to the backup provider.

📞 If none of your backup providers can care for your child, call Starting Point at 216-575-0061 and they will help you locate care. *Never, never leave a young child alone when you go to work, in a car, anywhere.*

Leave emergency numbers with your caregiver for:

- Your pediatrician
- All numbers where you can be contacted
- At least 2 relatives or friends
- Your hospital emergency room
- Poison control center

call

Starting Point

Whether you're a parent needing child care or a child care provider looking for specialized training Starting Point is there to help.

As the child care resource and referral agency for Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties, Starting Point works to improve the quality and increase the supply of child care throughout our region as well as to ensure good child care legislation on the Federal, State and local levels.

If you live in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga or Lake counties and are looking for child care and early education information or referrals, call one of these numbers:

Main office and Cuyahoga County: **1-216-575-0061**

Toll-free Number: **800-880-0971**

Or, log onto the Starting Point website at **www.starting-point.org**, where you can find more information about Starting Point and even conduct your own child care search.

Starting Point hours are 8:30 am to 5 pm. If you need emergency child care after hours, dial First Call for Help at 216-436-2000 or 211.

Or use our toll-free number:

1 - 8 0 0 - 8 8 0 - 0 9 7 1

www.starting-point.org



notes

STARTING POINT

Main Office
4600 EUCLID AVENUE, SUITE 500
CLEVELAND, OHIO 44103

Ashtabula County
4510 MAIN STREET
ASHTABULA, OHIO 44004

Geauga County
209 CENTER STREET
CHARDON, OHIO 44024

Lake County
9285 PROGRESS PARKWAY
MENTOR, OHIO 44060



Visits/Interviews

 CHECKLIST

Child Care Center and Family Child Care Home Visits.

VISIT 1 _____
Name of Center or Home Caregiver *Date*

VISIT 2 _____
Name of Center or Home Caregiver *Date*

VISIT 3 _____
Name of Center or Home Caregiver *Date*

1 2 3 What to ask the caregiver/teacher.

- What kind of experience do you have caring for children?
- What kind of training have you had in early childhood development, first aid, CPR, nutrition?
- Who will be caring for my child?
- How many children does each caregiver handle?
- How long have your caregivers been with you?
- Who provides children's meals and snacks. Can I see a weekly menu?
- Has this been designated an Ohio Healthy Program? (See www.occrra.org/ohp.php?pid=2)
- Does the program have policies that support serving healthy foods/beverages, daily physical activity and limiting screen time?
- Does the program work with parents to encourage healthy behavior?
- How will you make certain my child gets individual attention?
- What do you do if a child hits, bites another child, is uncooperative or has other problems requiring discipline?
- How do you soothe a child who is crying or upset?
- What is your approach to toilet training?
- Do you take children on field trips? Is permission required?
- What are the hours and days you offer care? What if I can't pick up my child on time?
- What are your fees? When do I pay them? Are there any added fees?
- Do I have to pay if a child is absent or on vacation? Is there a discount if more than one child is enrolled?
- Are there written contracts, emergency and sickness plans?
- Do you have backup care if you are sick or have an emergency?
- What kinds of health and medical information do you require?
- How will you communicate with me about my child's progress?
- Do you encourage parents to be involved? If so, how are they involved?
- What are the phone numbers of other parents I can contact?

over

Child Care Center and Family Child Care Home Visits.

1 2 3 What to look for in the center or home.

- Do the children seem happy and comfortable?
- Do the teachers seem to really like the children?
- Are the teachers warm and friendly?
- Do the teachers talk and play with the children?
- Do the teachers meet the children's needs quickly even when they're busy?
- Are the babies held and cuddled?
- Do the teachers set limits consistently and gently?
- Do the teachers work well with each other?
- Are the activities right for the children's ages?
- Is there time for play, stories, activities, meals and naps?
- Do they offer activities that encourage learning and growth?
- Is the place bright and cheerful.
- Is it safe and secure? (Does it have smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, window guards, stair gates, covered radiators, capped outlets, unbroken toys and equipment, fenced play area)
- Are the meals healthy and nutritious?
- Are medicines and cleaning products out of reach of the children?
- Is the place clean - especially eating, bathroom and diapering areas?
- Is there enough space for indoor and outdoor activities?

1 2 3 What to ask yourself.

- Will my child fit in here?
- Do I like their approach to learning, play and discipline?
- Can I easily talk with the staff about my child?
- Do I feel comfortable here?
- Is the location convenient for me?
- Do the costs, hours and policies meet my needs?

notes _____

In-Home Interviews

 CHECKLIST

In-Home Child Care Interviews.

APPLICANT 1	_____	_____
		<i>Date</i>
APPLICANT 2	_____	_____
		<i>Date</i>
APPLICANT 3	_____	_____
		<i>Date</i>

Before you interview a potential caregiver in person, it is a good idea to screen applicants by telephone first. Describe the position and the duties required and tell them how many children you have and what their ages are.

1 2 3 What to ask the In-home child caregiver.

- Can they work the required hours?
- Do your children seem to like them?
- Will they take your children outside on nice days?
- Will they pick up and comfort a crying baby?
- Will they change diapers promptly?
- Do they understand the importance of holding and talking to babies?
- Will they talk, play and interact with your children?
- How would they handle a toddler's temper tantrum?
- How would they handle toilet training?
- Will they read to your children?
- Will they help with homework?
- How would they handle sick children?
- Can they work late if needed?
- Will they accept the salary you offer?
- Will they take children to playdates or other activities?
- Do they understand the type of discipline you use?
- Do they know what to do in an emergency (fire, flood or other natural disaster, physical injury to child)?
- What kinds of meals do they feed the children?

1 2 3 References. Try to check at least 3 references.

- Were they reliable?
- Did they have a good relationship with the employer?
- Did they have a good relationship with the children?
- How long were they at the previous job?
- Why did they leave?

Some people also check for any criminal record with state or local police. Remember, trust your instincts. If you have any doubts, don't hire the person, even if interview answers and references are good. You are the best judge of what your child needs.

Finalize your arrangement.

When you've decided on an applicant, you'll need to:

- Draw up a contract. Outline hours, salary, overtime rate, leave days, benefit arrangements and caregiver responsibilities. Both parties need to sign and date.
- Have a trial period. Start with a part-time arrangement to test the relationship, familiarize the caregiver with your home, your routines, your children and neighbors. Observe carefully

Leave emergency information.

Post the phone numbers of your office, your spouses's office, your pediatrician, ambulance, poison control center, health information, allergies information or any special health conditions that your child has.

Have backup care available.

All child care arrangements need a back-up plan for emergencies. Make sure you have someone who can fill in on an emergency basis and never leave children home alone. For information and guidance, call Starting Point at 216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971.

Remember these responsibilities.

Contact an accountant or the IRS to get the most current information on taxes, minimum wage and benefit levels. You'll also find important tax information in IRS Publication 926: Household Employers Tax Guide (at www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p926.pdf.) Here are some things you'll need to do:

- Get Employer ID Number: File Form SS-4 with the IRS
- Verify Employment Eligibility: Make certain caregiver is a US citizen or legally permitted to work in the US.
- Determine tax responsibilities:
 - See if you need to pay Social Security or Medicare taxes: If you pay less than \$1,700, you do not need to pay these taxes.
 - See if your employee wants you to withhold income taxes. You do not need to do so unless requested by the employee.
 - See if you need to file Federal Unemployment Taxes (FUTA). If you pay \$1,000 or more per quarter, the first \$7,000 is subject to FUTA taxes and you must file IRS file form 940.
 - Check IRS Publication 926 for details on withholding Federal taxes. If you have tax questions, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.
 - Check with Ohio Department of Taxation at 800-282-1780 and Ohio Bureau of Workmen's Compensation at 800-644-6292 to see what Ohio taxes you'll need to pay.
- Investigate Earned Income Credit: Some employees qualify for this credit. Contact the IRS for more information.

Call Starting Point if you have questions on in-home care.
216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971.

State of Ohio

CHILD CARE CENTER REGULATIONS

Licensing.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services or the Ohio Department of Education licenses child care centers, preschools, and school-age programs. ODJFS will inspect all centers, unannounced, at least once every 12 months and may add inspections as needed. **Licensing compliance information is available on the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services website, <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/childcare.stm> or contact the Child Care Licensing section in Columbus: phone 1-877-302-2347, Option 4 or email childcarepolicy@jfs.ohio.gov.**

The following licensing requirements represent **minimum** standards for child care.

Maximum Number of Children per teacher for Child Care Centers

Infants (under 12 months)	5
Infants (12- under18 months)	6
Toddlers (18- under 30 months)	7
Toddlers (30 months- under 3 years)	8
Preschoolers (3 years)	12
Preschoolers (4-5 years)	14
Schoolagers (under 11 years)	18
Schoolagers (11-15 years)	20

When child care is provided for *13 or more children* in any setting or for *seven to twelve children* in a setting other than the provider's permanent residence, the setting must be *licensed* as a child care center by the The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Staff Qualifications.

Teachers and administrators must:

- Complete 15 hours in-service training annually, up to 45 hours OR have a Child Development Associate credential OR complete a mandated number of credit hours including childhood development from an accredited college or university; and
- Be trained in child development (20 hours), health and safety, child abuse recognition/prevention, first aid and communicable disease management.

Health and Safety.

- A food license or exemption status by the local health department is required and must be posted.
- A balanced diet which must meet state nutritional requirements must be provided.
- Equipment must be safe and in good condition.
- Must have a one-time building inspection in order to become licensed.
- Must have an annual fire inspection.
- Emergency plans must be posted.

State of Ohio Requirements

Rights of Parents.

Centers must make available to parents or guardians with written information on licensing; center programs, goals, philosophies, policies and procedures.

- Center name, address, telephone number and, if requested, tax ID number
- Ages and number of children in center plus licensed capacity
- Days and hours center is open
- Fees and overtime charges
- Enrollment and health information
- Sample daily program schedule for appropriate age group
- Supervision, discipline and safety policies and procedures
- Meal and snack menus; required nutritional information for parents/guardians providing food
- Emergency and health care policies and procedures
- Parent participation plan
- Transportation, field trip, special outing policies, procedures and dates
- Outdoor play and swimming policies
- Evening and overnight care availability, policies and procedures

Parents or guardians have the right to see:

- All daily activities
- All indoor and outdoor areas used by children
- Any and all records on their child or children
- Parents should also have unlimited access to the center during hours of operation
- Roster of names, phone numbers of parents/guardians with enrolled children is available upon request. (Parents can choose not to be listed.)

Child must have a physical exam and immunization prior to admission or within 30 days of enrollment.

Material and equipment that are suitable to the children's ages should be used.

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Family Child Care Homes

Types and Enrollment Limits

Type A Home This is a family child care home that is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Under Ohio law Type A homes can have one or two caregivers and may serve up to 12 children at any one time, including caregivers' children under age 6. Enrollment limits depend on the ages of infants and the number of staff. See the chart below. No more than 3 children can be under 18 months of age.

Infants Under 12 Months/1 Staff					Infants 12-18 Months/1 or 2 Staff				
# Infants		# Toddlers or Older	=	Total	# Infants		# Toddlers or Older	=	Total
0	+	6	=	6	0	+	6	=	6
1	+	4	=	5	1	+	5	=	6
2	+	3	=	5	2	+	4	=	6
3	+	2	=	5	3	+	3	=	6

Type B Private Provider Home In this type of home, one caregiver is legally allowed to care for six children but no more than three under two years of age but the home is not regulated.

Type B Professional Home This home is licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, meaning the home is inspected for health and safety and caregivers have undergone child care training and criminal background checks. In this type of home, there can be one adult caring for no more than six children at any one time. No more than three of these children may be under two years of age.

Care for Kids Home Care for Kids home providers are licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services.

Tax Credits CHILD CARE AND FAMILIES

Child and Dependent Care Credit

The Child and Dependent Care Credit is a tax benefit that helps families pay for child care they need in order to work or to look for work.

Who Qualifies?

Families who paid for child care for a child under age 13 and

- need child care to work or look for work;
- have earned income; and
- for whom they can claim an exemption

Eligible families must file a federal income tax return. Payments may be reduced if employer dependent care benefits are received and not included as income.

In general, the credit can only be claimed for a child claimed as a tax dependent. However, there are special rules for children of divorced or separated parents. For more information, log onto <https://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc602.html>.

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)

The EITC is a special tax benefit for people who work full or part time and meet income eligibility requirements. If you qualify, you'll owe less in taxes, and may even get cash back. Even if you don't owe income tax, you can get the credit but must file a federal tax return.

Who Qualifies?

Tax Year	Must earn less than		Number of Children
	If Single	If Married Filing Jointly	
2016	\$47,955	\$53,505	3 or More
	\$44,648	\$50,198	2
	\$39,296	\$44,846	1
	\$14,880	\$20,430	0

In order to get the credit, you must have a valid Social Security number and have earned income. Any investment income must be \$3,400 or less. For more information, log onto <https://www.irs.gov/Credits-&-Deductions/Individuals/Earned-Income-Tax-Credit>.

Child Tax Credit

The Child Tax Credit (CTC) is a federal tax credit, worth up to \$1000 per child for families with dependent children under age 17.

Who Qualifies?

To qualify for the CTC, you must have a child who meets the following criteria:

- under age 17;
- a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or U.S. resident;
- did not provide more than half his/her own support*;
- lived with you over half the year*;
- is a son, daughter, stepchild, foster child, adopted child, sibling, step-sibling or a descendant of any of these. If the claimed child is not your dependent, you must complete *Form 8901*;
- is claimed as a dependent on your tax return.

Income limitations apply to the CTC. If your income is above \$75,000 as a single, head of household or qualifying widow(er), \$110,000 if married filing jointly or \$55,000 if married filing separately or if you pay no income tax, your CTC will be reduced and you must file for the *Additional Child Tax Credit*.

** There are special rules for divorced or separated parents. Contact the IRS for more information.*

**For More Information on the Child Tax Credit log onto
<https://www.irs.gov/uac/Ten-Facts-about-the-Child-Tax-Credit>**

Aid to Working Families

Child Care Assistance

Eligible families can receive help with the cost of caring for children while working or in school. The Child Care Assistance for Working Families Program pays part of the cost of child care for eligible families (see chart below).

It allows you to choose a licensed child care center, school-age program, head start, child care home provider (non-relative or relative.) The amount you pay is based on your income, family size and number of children in child care.

Family Size	Maximum Monthly Income for Initial Eligibility
2	\$1,727
3	\$2,177
4	\$2,628
5	\$3,079
6	\$3,529
7	\$3,980
8	\$4,431
9	\$4,881
10	\$5,332
11	\$5,783
12	\$6,233

You can apply by phone. No office visit necessary. Download the application at <https://cjfs.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/child-care-assistance-program.aspx>

Contact the Cuyahoga County Hotline at 216-416-4440.

In Ashtabula County, call 440-994-2020.

In Geauga County, call 440-285-9141.

In Lake County, call 440-350-4000.

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Healthy Start

The Healthy Start program gives you greater control over the ups and downs of the family budget with free health insurance for your eligible children under the age of 19. Some parents, 19 and 20 year olds and pregnant women may also be eligible depending on their income. Eligibility is determined by the number of family members at home and total household income. Check the chart below to see if your family qualifies.

In order to determine eligibility, you must provide written proof of certain information such as family income and size, pregnancy (if appropriate) and citizenship.

For eligibility information and to apply:

In Cuyahoga County,

- call the Healthy Start Hotline at 216-987-7346
- apply online at www.healthystart.cuyahogacounty.us, **or**
- visit your Neighborhood Family Service Center

In Ashtabula County, call 440-998-1110

In Geauga County, call 440-285-9141

In Lake County, call 440-350-4000

Children enrolled in Healthy Start receive a wide range of health care services, including:

- Regular checkups
- Dental care and treatment
- Eye care and eyeglasses
- Immunizations
- Emergency Care
- Hospitalization
- Prescriptions

Pregnant women also receive:

- Prenatal and postnatal services

CUYAHOGA COUNTY

Invest in Children

Starting Point is a key participant in Cuyahoga County's Invest in Children (IIC), an innovative program that brings together a wealth of resources in an effort to give young children the best possible start in life. Goals of the program are to enhance the effectiveness of parents and families, to

better the safety and health of children, to prepare children to be successful in school and to mobilize the community to ensure the well-being of its youngest citizens. Following are the elements of the program and the community agencies involved in their implementation.

Effective Parents and Children

Home Visiting and Coordination of Services, including:

- Prenatal Home Visits for at-risk pregnant women and teens;
- Newborn Home Visits by a registered nurse for eligible first time and teen mothers two weeks after the baby's birth; and;
- On-going Home Visits and Service Coordination for families with children under the age of three. Services include developmental screenings and evaluations, linkages to and coordination with community resources and services, development of individualized Family Service Plans, transition services and family support.

Prenatal services provided by **MomsFirst, City of Cleveland, 216-664-4194.**

Prenatal, newborn, ongoing home visits and service coordination provided by **Help Me Grow,* Cuyahoga County, 216-698-7500.**

Early Childhood Mental Health Services, including:

- Identifies children under the age of three with social and emotional concerns and links their families to supportive services.

Services provided by **Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County, 216.241.3400, ext. 361.**

Safe and Healthy Children

Healthy Start and other Medicaid:

- Identifies and enrolls children of low-income families in State and Federally funded insurance programs.

Services provided by **Cuyahoga Job & Family Services, 216-416-4440.**

***HELP ME GROW** is a statewide program. For other counties in the Starting Point area, please call 888-808-6530, Ashtabula; 440-729-5250, Geauga; and 440-350-2433, Lake.

Safe and Healthy Children, *continued*

Lead Poisoning Prevention Project:

- Identifies newborns in homes in zip codes at high risk for lead poisoning in order to uncover lead hazards and provide opportunities for repair.

Services provided by **Cleveland Department of Public Health, 216-664-2324 and Cuyahoga County Board of Health, 216-201-2000.**

Children Prepared for School

Early Care and Education Professional Development:

- Enhances the quality and increases the supply of regulated child care in Cuyahoga County by (1) offering caregivers individualized training and technical assistance, access to college coursework, community based training, and mentoring programs, and (2) providing technical assistance to increase the number of family child care homes and child care centers applying for national accreditation.

Step up to Quality:

- A voluntary rating system of the State of Ohio aimed at improving the quality of care provided by child care centers and family child care homes through support services, professional development, community based training opportunities and grants to improve quality.

TEACH (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps):

- Provides college scholarships towards an Associate of Arts and Science or Bachelor's degree in early care and education for family child care home providers and child care teachers.

Special Needs Child Care:

- Strives to increase and improve the care available to children with special needs. Through this initiative, community agencies work with child care teachers and families to accommodate special needs children in regular child care facilities by offering training, technical assistance, equipment, supplies, and support.

Services provided by **Starting Point at 216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971.**

STARTING POINT POLICIES

What You Should Know About Us

Starting Point works to help parents locate, choose and evaluate child care options--providing parents with the information they need to make good choices. Here are some things you should know:

Does Starting Point Recommend Child Care Centers?

Starting Point does not rate, recommend or regulate child care and out-of-school-time programs and resources provided through its referral services. We make every effort to supply current information on providers but cannot guarantee providers' capabilities. We encourage parents to use the information provided on choosing quality child care to assist them in evaluating and selecting child care providers. We urge families to interview several providers to determine the best option for their family's needs.

Are There Fees for Starting Point Services?

As the community based child care resource and referral organization for Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties, we provide the following services **free of charge** to families: referrals on available child care/early education programs; print materials and other resources on choosing quality child care and other family issues and a parent newsletter.

Is My Information Kept Confidential?

All individual client data is kept confidential. Starting Point does not share or sell mailing lists or client names. Clients may be contacted by Starting Point for voluntary satisfaction feedback.

What if I Have a Complaint?

If You Have a Complaint about Starting Point:

If a complaint arises regarding Starting Point professional services, every effort should be made to resolve the issue with the staff member or his/her immediate supervisor. If this fails, the person should submit a signed written document regarding the situation to the Executive Director. The staff member involved will do the same. The Executive Director will then take the necessary steps to resolve the situation to the satisfaction of the individuals involved.

If You Have a Complaint about a Child Care Provider:

While Starting Point is not a regulatory agency, we will accept complaints in oral or written form from parents or other concerned individuals regarding licensed, certified or unregulated child care. Complaints will be handled in a confidential manner according to established procedures. We will:

- help the complainant clarify the nature of the problem and encourage discussion of the situation with the caregiver or child care center director; and
- report any potential licensing violation or suspected child abuse complaint to the appropriate authorities and encourage the complainant to do so. A list of investigative agencies is included on the reverse of this insert.

We reserve the right to suspend or remove providers from our registry for violations of Starting Point's Criteria for Listing standard for home day care, State of Ohio licensing standards, repeated complaints or complaints of child abuse or neglect. In such cases, childcare providers will be informed of the procedures and appeals process. A Complaint Committee has been established to review adherence to procedures and resolve conflicts.

For questions or clarifications, contact Starting Point at 216-575-0061 or 1-800-880-0971.

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Phone Numbers to Call for Child Care Complaints

Agency	Phone	Counties Served	Types of Complaints
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office for Children and Families Help Desk	877-302-2347, Option 4	Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake	Centers, Preschools, Head Starts, School-Age, Summer Day Camps, Type A Homes, Homes Caring for More Than 6 Children
Ohio Department of Education	877-644-6338	Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake	Public Preschools, School-based School-Age Programs, Charter School Early Childhood Programs
Ashtabula County Children's Services Board	888-998-1811	Ashtabula	Abuse, Neglect
Cuyahoga County Dept. of Children and Family Services	216-696-KIDS	Cuyahoga	Abuse, Neglect
Geauga County Dept. of Job and Family Services	440-285-9141 (8am-4:30pm) 888-285-5665 (after-hours)	Geauga	Abuse, Neglect
Lake County Dept. of Job and Family Services	440-350-4000	Lake	Abuse, Neglect

Other Phone Numbers You Should Know

Community, Health and Human Services

Call 211

For help in finding community, health and human services in Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga and Lake counties

Or log onto one of these websites:

ASHTABULA COUNTY ACQUIRE, www.accaa.org

CUYAHOGA COUNTY United Way of Greater Cleveland First Call for Help, www.211cleveland.org

GEAUGA COUNTY United Way of Geauga County First Call for Help, www.211geauga.org

LAKE COUNTY United Way of Lake County 2-1-1 Lake County, www.uwlc.org