

FINDING QUALITY CHILD CARE

Your search begins here!



Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child. Since 1992, Child Care Aware of Kansas has helped families just like yours, understand how to determine the best child care setting for their child. Our statewide network of child care resource and referral (CCR&Rs) agencies works together to connect families across Kansas to child care in their area

Contact our knowledgeable Resource Specialists or visit our website for FREE information and a list of local child care providers!



877-678-2548



ks.childcareaware.org/childcaresearch

Guiding Your Child Care Search

Use this document to guide your search for quality child care that meets your needs. Please visit our website for the most up-to-date information and data.

In this guide:

- About licensed child care in Kansas
- Finding quality child care
- Child care costs and assistance
- Tips for successful partnership



ABOUT LICENSED CHILD CARE IN KANSAS



The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) supports continuity of operations for licensed child care facilities. Visit their website for a complete list of child care licensing requirements - including licensed capacity, provider compliance checks, and more.



kdhe.ks.gov/280/Child-Care-Licensing

Understanding Your Child Care Options

There are many child care options available, depending on what your family is looking for from a provider. The most significant decision is whether you prefer a child care center or an in-home provider.

Center-Based

Child care centers often offer more options than in-home providers, with structured environments, age-specific activities, and set hours. They include Headstart programs and preschools.

Home-Based

Home-based child care is typically offered in the provider's home, with flexible scheduling and age ranges. Providers must follow state and federal guidelines and offer daily activities.

School-Age

School-age programs serve k-6 graders, typically before/after school and during summer break. Often run by schools or community partners to provide care outside the traditional school year.

Visit KDHE's website for the latest licensing requirements, including the maximum number of children allowed per program type.

CHILD CARE
▶ *in* **KANSAS** ◀

childcareinkansas.com is a great website for more detailed information on the different program types.

**DID YOU
KNOW**

If you receive Child Care Assistance from the Kansas Department for Children and Families, certain relatives may be eligible to provide home-based care for your children.

FINDING QUALITY CHILD CARE

The interview and selection process is unique for everyone. Use these tips to help you make the best decision for your family! For more information on choosing quality child care, visit us online.

Research Potential Child Care Programs

Contact our Resource Specialist or easily search online!

Narrow down best-fit providers based on your family's needs — including location, hours, cost, type of program, and results of child care inspections. Then, you can review what providers have availability when you need it.



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Getting to know your potential provider is very important! Don't forget to check a provider's inspection results and license status.

kdhe.ks.gov/386/Facility-Inspection-Results

Determine Your Budget

Your budget will play a big part in the final decision. Your weekly or monthly child care cost will vary depending on the type of child care you choose, your specific provider and your child's age.

Meet with Multiple Providers

Meeting with multiple child care providers lets you compare environments, teaching styles, and safety, helping you find the best fit for your child's needs and your preferences.

Making a Decision

Explore: Start your search early. Finding the right child care may take time.

Evaluate: Consider your child's learning style, family needs, and the location/hours of care.

Observe: Visit at least three programs, interview providers, and tour the facilities.

Decide: Review your notes, trust your instincts, and address any concerns.

Be Involved: Partner with your child care provider, and visit your child anytime.

Use the checklist at the end of this packet to help guide you in your child care search.

WHAT TO ASK

Asking the right questions can help you learn more about a provider. Ask what learning activities are offered in the program and how the provider ensures health and safety.

CHILD CARE COSTS AND ASSISTANCE



Child care costs vary by factors like your child's age, program activities, provider qualifications, and location. Financial assistance is available through various subsidies and programs, so explore these options to reduce expenses.

Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (FSA)

This tax advantaged financial account allows an employee to set aside earnings to pay for care. Money deducted from an employee's pay into an FSA is not subject to payroll taxes, resulting in substantial payroll tax savings.

Military Subsidies

You may qualify for child care subsidy assistance if you are an Active Duty military family or Active Duty National Guard (AGR) serving under Title 10 or Title 32, United States Code (U.S.C.). Visit www.usa.childcareaware.org for information on how to apply.

Child Care Assistance

You may be eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit. Call 1-800-829-1040 or visit www.irs.gov for more information.

Some facilities offer discounts for multiple children or sliding fees. Businesses and communities may also have programs to help with child care costs.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) has funding available to help income eligible families pay for child care in a regulated facility, or by a relative caregiver. Call 1-888-369-4777, visit www.dcf.ks.gov, or visit childcareinkansas.com for more information.

For information on assistance programs for medical coverage, utility payments, nutrition, housing, and more, visit our website.



ks.childcareaware.org/family-resources/

**CHECK
THIS OUT**

These resources from Child Care Aware of America to help you as you're budgeting for child care costs.
childcareaware.org/families/cost-child-care/budgeting-child-care/

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Even after your child is enrolled, it's important to stay involved with their care by volunteering, asking for updates, and checking in with your child about their experience.

Tips for a Successful Partnership with Your Child Care Provider

- 1 Pick up your child on time.**
If an emergency prevents you from being on time, call.
- 2 Communicate openly with your provider** about your child and his/her progress, as well as any concerns you may have.
- 3 Find ways to get involved.**
Working together is key to making the partnership work.
- 4 Follow the agreed upon contract and policies.** Keep a copy for your records. If you feel that the child care provider is not adhering to their own policies, mention it. Small issues can quickly become big issues.
- 5 Pay on time.** Your child care provider is operating a business and depends on you.

FAMILY SUPPORT



 **24/7 SUPPORT**
1-800-332-6378


1-800-CHILDREN
Supporting Parents
Powered by Kansas Children's Service League

No question is too big or too small when it comes to parenting. Connect with resources and services in your community with 1-800-CHILDREN.

Free and confidential support is available in English, Spanish, and multiple other languages.



FAMILY SUPPORT

Visit the Family Support Center to view all of this information and more online!
ks.childcareaware.org/family-support-center/



Checklist for Choosing Quality Child Care

You have a lot to consider when selecting a child care provider. Use this checklist to help determine the right provider for you.

What to look for

- Staff are engaged, and provide individual, positive attention and handle conflicts calmly.
- Staff interact at the child's level, promoting listening, talking, and play.
- The environment is cheerful, clean, and safe with well-maintained equipment.
- A daily schedule includes free play, naps, meals, outdoor/indoor play, and learning activities.
- Meals/snacks are nutritious, with a posted menu offering healthy choices.
- The outdoor play area is safe, fenced, and supervised.
- Emergency numbers and evacuation routes are clearly posted.

Infant and Toddler care considerations

- Caregivers engage by talking, describing, and reading aloud.
- Safe Sleep Policies and procedures are in place. Nap times are relaxed and stress free.
- Discuss procedures on feedings, breastfeeding, diaper changes, toilet learning, and naps.
- The setting is child-proofed for safe crawling and walking.

Preschool care considerations

- The schedule is flexible to accommodate individual needs.
- The provider actively interacts with the children.
- Consistent limits are set to help children learn to make their own choices.

School-age care considerations

- Age-appropriate activities are available when school is out.
- Adequate space is provided for homework.
- The provider supports children with projects, homework, and engaging activities.
- Discuss options for child care on no school days.

General considerations

- Ensure the cost fits your budget. Understand what is included in cost and any additional fees.
- Confirm hours and holidays align with your work schedule.
- Consider if your child will be happy and if you feel comfortable with the program.
- Request and contact references to learn about others' experiences.
- Review policies on philosophy, discipline, illness/injury, abuse and neglect, and transportation.
- Ensure staff and volunteers undergo references and background checks.
- Review staff education, experience, and tenure, including First Aid and CPR training.
- Confirm first aid kit availability and staff training to administer medication.
- Ensure the program encourages parental visits and family involvement.
- Review policies for drop-off/pick-up, emergencies, and child safety during transitions.
- Ask about absence/vacation policies and daily communication with parents.
- Ensure the KDHE license is posted.

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