

FOR PREGNANT AND PARENTING TEENS

A Guide to Child Care and Development Programs

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County of Los Angeles
Chief Executive Office, Service Integration Branch
Office of Child Care
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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
A GUIDE TO CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

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INTRODUCTION

Finding a child care and development program that meets the needs of your child and family is a very important responsibility. It also can be a challenging and lengthy process. As parents, while you are going to school or working, you want to trust that the person or program you choose to care for your child is keeping her/him safe and healthy and nurturing your child's growth and development. In addition, you want to share information with your child's provider or program staff about your child's progress and discuss ways that both of you can help your child grow and learn.

The Office of Child Care is delighted to offer you this Guide to Child Care and Development Programs (Guide). The Guide is designed to help you make informed decisions when looking for a child care and development program for your child and family. In addition, it may help you organize your important documents and information on your child so that it is readily available to you when you enroll your child into a child care and development program. Ultimately, the Guide is intended to help you in your search and selection of a high quality child care and development program that is the best fit for you and your family.

The Guide contains the following:

- ☒ ***Types of Child Care and Development Programs:*** a listing and brief description of the different types of child care and development programs.
- ☒ ***Using Your Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency:*** a guide to prepare you for requesting referrals to child care and development programs, including information that you will want to share with the resource and referral specialist.
- ☒ ***Choosing a Quality Child Care and Development Program:*** a checklist of things to look for and ask when visiting prospective child care and development programs.

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- ☒ ***Finding Help Paying for Care:*** provides information on three programs designed to connect eligible families with subsidized child care.
- ☒ ***Early Head Start Programs:*** an overview and listing of the Early Head Start Programs serving low-income pregnant women, infants, and toddlers from ages birth to three located in Los Angeles County.
- ☒ ***Head Start Programs:*** an overview and listing of the Head Start Programs serving low-income families with children from ages three to five located in Los Angeles County.
- ☒ ***Adolescent Family Life Programs:*** a listing of programs in Los Angeles County that provide case management services to pregnant and parenting teens, including assisting teens and their children connect to health and social services, as well as resources for finding and selecting a child care and development program.
- ☒ ***California School Age Families Education (Cal-SAFE):*** a listing of the Cal-SAFE programs, which help pregnant and parenting students succeed in school while providing child care and development services to their children.
- ☒ ***My Child Care Checklist:*** a checklist of documents and information that you will likely need to provide to the child care and development program you select.
- ☒ ***Important Information about My Child:*** a handy worksheet for you to record information about your child and use as a resource for the type of information you will need when you enroll your child.
- ☒ ***Southern California Child Care Resource and Referral Services:*** a map showing the location and service areas of the resource and referral agencies in Los Angeles County. This map will help you select the agency that serves the community in which you live, attend school, or work.

We hope you find this Guide helpful in your search for and participation in a high quality child care and development program. While parenting can be demanding, we hope your experiences are happy and rewarding.

TYPES OF CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

NOTES:

Child care and development programs are offered in different settings, including family child care homes, centers, and schools. Most child care and development programs are required to have a license to operate by the State of California. While licensing is intended to ensure the basic health and safety of the children participating in the program, licensing alone does not guarantee that the program will help your child develop and grow.

Refer to Choosing a Quality Child Care and Development Program on page 9 of this Guide to help you ask the right questions when visiting a child care and development program to make sure that it is a good fit for your child and family.

Following is a list and brief description of the different types of child care and development programs:

Child Care and Development Center

Full- or part-day program that cares for infants and toddlers (birth to three years old), preschoolers (three to five year olds) and school age children (up to 13 years old) in a group setting. Centers may serve one age group or a combination of two or all three age groups, separating the children into classrooms by age groups.

Family Child Care Home

A family child care provider's home is licensed to care for up to eight or 14 children from birth up to age 13, including the provider's own children, in the provider's home.

Early Head Start

Free comprehensive program for low-income pregnant women, infants, and toddlers from ages birth to three, including young children with disabilities. Services may be provided in the home of the family, a licensed family child care home, and/or a center. Comprehensive services include helping families get health, nutrition, and social services.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD

My child's name: _____
First, Middle, and Last

My child's date of birth: _____ My child's sex: Female/Male

My contact information:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Telephone numbers

Home: _____ Cell: _____

School: _____ Work: _____

Contact information for person who can take responsibility for my child if I cannot be reached:

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Telephone numbers:

Home _____ Cell _____

Contact information for my child's doctor in case of emergency:

Doctor's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State, and Zip Code: _____

Telephone numbers:

Office _____ Cell _____

Record of medications, including the name of the doctor and instructions for providing the medications to my child:

Head Start

Free part-day (3½ hours) comprehensive child development program for low-income and disabled preschoolers ages three to five years old living in the local community. Head Start generally operates from September to June. Families most in need, including families at risk and/or in crisis, four year-old children, and children with disabilities, receive priority for enrollment. Comprehensive services include social services, health, mental health, nutrition, and parent involvement.

State Preschool Programs

Free part-day (3½ hours) comprehensive child development program for three- to four-year-old children from low-income families living in the local community. State Preschool Programs generally operate from August through June or September through June. Families with open cases with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) receive priority for enrollment, as space is available. State Preschool provides free meals and snacks, offers parent education, and encourages parent participation. Families are referred to health and social services, as needed.

Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP)

Part-day (3½ hours) child development programs for four year old children regardless of family income. LAUP generally operates from September to June. LAUP is free to families receiving services and/or under the supervision of the DCFS and the Probation Department. Families not associated with DCFS or Probation may be required to pay an investment fee depending on their income and the program in which they enroll their child.

In-Home Care

Typically, in-home care occurs in the family's home or the home of the provider. In-home care is not licensed, therefore, it is essential for the parent or caregiver to make sure that the arrangement works.

School Age/Extended Care

A variety of programs offer supervision, recreation, and enrichment to children during out of school hours, including before and after school and during winter, spring, and summer breaks. Programs may be offered on the school campus or in another location, such as a park or community-based organization. Some programs are licensed, while others are regulated by other entities.

For referrals to a licensed child care and development program, contact your local child care resource and referral agency. A map and listing of the 10 Southern California Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies is included as an insert.

USING YOUR LOCAL CHILD CARE RESOURCE AND REFERRAL AGENCY

Selecting a child care and development program that will help your child develop and learn and meet the needs of your family is an important job. Because you want the best for your child, you will want to spend time learning as much as you can about your choices – whether you prefer a center-based or family child care home – and visiting different child care and development programs before you enroll your child. In addition, you will need to think about the cost of care and how you will pay for it or find out if you qualify for help paying for your child care. Most importantly, you will want to consider the quality of experiences for you and your child.

As a first step to beginning your search for a child care and development program, you will want to contact your local child care resource and referral agency.

The map with contact information of the 10 Southern California Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies is included as an insert. For child care and development referrals, contact the agency closest to your home, school, or work.

MY CHILD CARE CHECKLIST

Documents that may be required to enroll my child in a child care and development program:

- Copy of my child's original birth certificate.
- Copy of my child's current Immunization Record (update annually).
- Income verification.
- Current address verification (examples: driver's license/identification card, utility bill, etc.).
- Recent photos of my child.
- Copies of social security cards for my child and me.
- Physical form (provided by child care program) with current TB clearance completed by my child's doctor.

Information I may need to provide when I enroll my child in a child care and development program:

- My child's name, date of birth and sex.
- My contact information, including my name, address, and telephone numbers (e.g., home, work, school, and/or cell).
- Name, telephone number and address of persons who can take responsibility for my child if I cannot be reached (e.g., my parents, my child's father/mother, etc.).
- Any information about my child's food restrictions and allergies.
- Contact information, including the name, address, and telephone number of my child's doctor in case of emergency.
- Record of current medications, including the name of the doctor, and instructions for providing the medications to my child.

The documents required to enroll your child may vary based on the type of program for which you are eligible, if subsidized, and/or wish to enroll your child.

Volunteers of America – El Pueblo
11630 Hessa Street
North Hollywood, CA 91601
(818) 985-9083

Volunteers of America - Wilmington
445 North Avalon Boulevard
Wilmington, CA 90744
(310) 847-1801

Volunteers of America - Hawthorne
4951 West 119th Place
Hawthorne, CA 90250
(310) 675-0653

HEAD START PROGRAMS

Head Start is a free, part-day (3½ hours) comprehensive child development program for low-income and disabled preschoolers ages three to five years old living in the local community. Head Start generally operates from September to June. Families most in need, including families at risk and/or in crisis, four year old children, and children with disabilities, receive priority for enrollment. Comprehensive services include social services, health, mental health, nutrition, and parent involvement. Contact your local child care resource and referral agency for referrals to a Head Start Program in your community. You may also receive referrals to Head Start Programs by calling, toll-free, 1-877-PRE-K-KID (773-5543).

What is a Child Care Resource and Referral Agency?

- Gives families referrals to a range of licensed child care and development programs for children from birth to 12 years old.
- Provides resources and referrals to low-income families eligible for child care subsidies.
- Offers written materials on several topics, including selecting a child care and development program that is right for you, as well as brochures on child development topics, such as separation, toilet training, discipline, and more. Ask about their brochures and other materials and how you can receive them.

How to Request Referrals

Before you call the resource and referral agency, think about the type of care you would prefer, such as center-based or family child care. You may decide that you would like to visit both types of programs to help you make your decision. Also, think about whether you want your child in a program near your home, school, or work.

When you call, the resource and referral specialist should ask you for the following information:

- Age of your child
- Your home ZIP code
- Hours child care is needed
- Why you need child care (attending school, working, participating in job training, child's enrichment and school readiness)
- Where you want the care (city and ZIP code) – near your home, school, work, etc.
- Special considerations (such as whether your child has disabilities or special needs, you need transportation, you need help paying for care/subsidized child care; your family speaks a language other than English)
- Types of care you are most interested in (center-based or family child care home; full-day or part-day)

A Special Needs Advisory Project (SNAP), located at each child care resource and referral agency, assists parents of children with special needs from birth through 12 years of age in accessing quality child care and development programs and connecting to other community resources.

Based on your answers, the resource and referral specialist will provide you with a list of referrals. Typically, you will receive the following information:

- Name of the centers and/or family child care providers
- For centers, the address and telephone number
- For family child care, the closest major cross streets and the provider's telephone number

Most referrals will be provided to you on the telephone the day you call. In some cases, the resource and referral specialist may call you later the same day or later in the week with a list of referrals.

It will be up to you to contact the centers and/or family child care home providers to conduct telephone interviews and/or schedule times to meet with them and visit their programs. If you are not satisfied with any of the programs that you have contacted and/or visited, call the resource and referral agencies for additional referrals.

Paying for Care

The cost of child care and development services generally depends on the age of your child and the hours of care needed. Be sure to let the resource and referral specialist know if you think you may qualify for subsidized child care. In addition, you may ask for referrals to programs that offer subsidized child care or scholarships to families unable to afford the full cost.

Funding for subsidized care is limited and scholarships depend on the fundraising efforts of the individual center. Ask the resource and referral specialist to add your name to the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL), which is a waiting list of families eligible for subsidized child care. More information about the LACEL is also available at www.childcare.lacounty.gov.

UCLA Early Head Start
14423 Van Nuys Boulevard
Arleta, CA 91331
(818) 485-0129

University of Southern California
School for Early Childhood Education
509 West 29th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90007
(213) 743-4650

Venice Family Clinic
Children First Early Head Start Program
604 Rose Avenue
Venice, CA 90291
(310) 664-7557

Vista Del Mar and Family Services
Home-SAFE
6926 Melrose Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90038
(323) 934-7979

Volunteers of America
Maud Booth Family Center
11243 Kittridge Street
North Hollywood, CA 91606
(818) 980-7634

Volunteers of America
Home Visitor's Office
1135 West 257th Street
Harbor City, CA 90710
(310) 257-6892

Long Beach Unified School District
Head Start Program
2898 Orange Avenue
Signal Hill, CA 90755
(562) 427-0833

Los Angeles County Office of Education
10100 Pioneer Boulevard, Suite 100
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670
(562) 940-1770

Palmdale School District Office
975 East Avenue P-8
Palmdale, CA 93550
(661) 273-4710 x402

Plaza de la Raza – El Monte
11015 Bloomfield Avenue
Santa Fe Springs, CA 90690
(562) 777-7170

Plaza de la Raza Early Head Start
1824 Central Avenue
South El Monte, CA 91733
(562) 444-3174

Plaza de la Raza Early Head Start
12830 Clark Avenue
Downey, CA 90242-4720
(562) 803-6229

Pomona High School
475 Bangor
Pomona, CA 91767
(909) 397-4639

Other Resources

In addition to your local resource and referral agency, information on finding and selecting high quality child care and development services is available from the National Association for the Education of Young Children at www.naeyc.org and the National Association for Family Child Care at www.nafcc.org. The Web sites also post listings of licensed centers and family child care homes that have received national accreditation for meeting high quality standards.

CHOOSING A QUALITY CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: A CHECKLIST

Finding a child care and development program that is right for you and your family is a process that will take time, lots of time. But in the end it will be worth it! As a parent, you want to choose a program that makes sure your child is safe, loved and cared for and works with you to promote your child's growth and development. Ultimately, the best programs are those in which the provider or teacher builds a warm and loving relationship with your child as the foundation for your child's growth and learning and supports and works with you as your child's first and primary teacher.

This checklist is a list of items to consider when visiting prospective child care and development programs. When you schedule your visit, arrange to spend an hour or two to get a sense of the program. Be sure to observe and ask questions. And use this checklist. The more items you check based on what you see or learn by asking questions during your visit, the more you will know whether you have found a quality program.¹

- Is the program licensed? Ask to see a copy of the license.
- What is the ratio of children to caregivers? Check the license for capacity and ages.

¹ The following checklist is provided with the permission of Connections for Children. Retrieved from www.cfc-ca.org on July 9, 2007.

- Is there an open door policy that welcomes your visits, participation, and input?
- Does the caregiver encourage you to share appropriate information about your child and family? How is ongoing communication encouraged between parent(s) and caregiver?
- What is the program philosophy? Does the caregiver respect your concerns as a parent(s) and your philosophy, values, and goals for your child?
- Does the caregiver listen closely to children and use positive language when talking to them? Do you feel comfortable with this person and the way she/he interacts with you and the children?
- What are the expectations and rules for children's behavior? Does the caregiver use positive and non-punitive discipline methods? Ask and look for examples.
- What type of child care training has the caregiver received?
- Does the caregiver talk with the children and play with them on the floor?
- Observe the indoor and outdoor environments for safety and cleanliness.
- Are materials easily available to children? Are toys and materials appropriate to the development levels of the children? Is there enough variety to facilitate development in all areas?
- How is the day structured? Are there scheduled times for free play, structured activities, meals, quiet time, naps, and outdoor play?
- Are daily or weekly activity plans posted? What types of activities are provided, both child-initiated and adult-initiated? Does your child bring home of variety to things to show you?
- What is the policy on watching television and using the computer?

EARLY HEAD START PROGRAMS

Early Head Start is a free, comprehensive program for low-income pregnant women, infants, and toddlers from ages birth to three, including young children with disabilities. Services may be provided in the home of the family, a licensed family child care home, and/or a center. Program staff also help families access health, nutrition, and social services. For more information about Early Head Start and enrolling your child, call the program located closest to your home.

Baldwin Park Unified School District
 3699 North Holly Avenue
 Baldwin Park, CA 91706
 (626) 962-3311 x4200, 4524, or 4642

Hope Street Family Center
 1401 South Grand Avenue
 Los Angeles, CA 90015
 (213) 742-6385

Center for Community and Family Services
 565 North Rosemead Boulevard
 Pasadena, CA 91107
 (626) 795-7990

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science
 Head Start Program
 1731 East 120th Street
 Los Angeles, CA 90059
 (310) 605-0164 x244

Children's Institute, Inc.
 701 South New Hampshire Avenue
 Los Angeles, CA 90005
 (213) 385-5100 x1885

CALIFORNIA SCHOOL AGE FAMILIES EDUCATION (CAL-SAFE) PROGRAM

The Cal-SAFE Program is designed to support the academic success of pregnant and parenting teens and provide child care and development services to their children.

The following school districts offer Cal-SAFE Programs:

ABC Unified School District	(562) 926-7136
Baldwin Park Unified School District	(626) 962-3311
Bassett Unified School District	(626) 931-3005
Charter Oak Unified School District	(626) 966-8331 x215
Covina Valley Unified School District	(626) 974-7000 x2072
Glendale Unified School District	(818) 247-4805
Hacienda La Puente Unified School District	(626) 933-6540
Long Beach Unified School District	(562) 595-5366
Los Angeles County Office of Education	(562) 940-1873
Los Angeles Unified School District	(213) 482-1648
Montebello Unified School District	(323) 887-7929
Paramount Unified School District	(562) 602-6033
Rowland Unified School District	(626) 913-0376
Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District	(310) 399-5865
Walnut Valley Unified School District	(909) 468-5208
West Covina Unified School District	(626) 931-1810 x7
Whittier Union High School District	(562) 698-8121 x1201

- Are meals and snacks provided? Are they nutritious and fresh? Are menu plans posted? Is social interaction encouraged during meal and snack times?
- Do the children seem happy, secure, and stimulated? How would you feel in this particular program, and group of children?
- Is your child eager to go there each day? Does she/he talk positively about friends, activities, and the caregiver? Is your child happy when you arrive, even reluctant to go home?

FINDING HELP PAYING FOR CARE

Locating *affordable*, quality care is a challenge for most families. It is of particular concern for low- to moderate-income families, many of whom may be eligible for government-subsidized care. Unfortunately, there is not enough funding to help all of the families that meet the income criteria for a child care and development subsidy. The following is a listing of three programs that are intended to help connect eligible families with subsidized child care.

Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List

The Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL), with funding from the California Department of Education (CDE), was created to help connect low- to moderate-income families with child care and development programs that offer subsidies as funds and openings become available. The LACEL is a countywide list of low-income families who need help paying for child care and development services.

Subsidized child care and development programs include:

- Full-day child care and development programs for children ages birth to five
- Half-day preschool programs for children ages three and four
- Before and after school programs for children up to age 13

- Alternative Payment Programs that subsidize child care for families who can select among a variety of child care settings, such as centers, family child care homes, or friends and relatives.

To register on the LACEL, contact your local child care resource and referral agency.

See insert for the map and listing of the 10 Southern California Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

Cal-Learn

If you are participating in Cal-Learn, you are eligible for child care services. Cal-Learn is a mandatory program for CalWORKs participants receiving cash assistance, under 19 years of age, are pregnant or parenting, and have not completed high school. Cal-Learn participants are required to enroll in high school or an equivalency program. For more information about Cal-Learn, including the eligibility requirements and the services available under the program, contact the County of Los Angeles Cal-Learn toll free number at 1-800-511-2070 or call your local Adolescent Family Life Program (see page 13).

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Child Care Assistance Program

The DCFS Child Care Program serves “at risk” children and families. Teen parents under the supervision of DCFS and living with their birth parent, a relative, or in a basic licensed foster home may be eligible for free child care for up to six, 12, or 18 months. For more information, speak with your Children’s Services Worker (CSW) to decide whether child care is a necessary part of your case plan. If so, your CSW will submit a child care referral form to the DCFS Child Care Unit.

ADOLESCENT FAMILY LIFE PROGRAMS

Adolescent Family Life Programs (AFLPs) provide case management services to pregnant and parenting teens. Among the services provided by AFLPs are: ensuring teens are able to meet their educational and career goals; promoting healthy family relationships; and assisting teens and their children with access to health and social services, including resources for finding and selecting a child care and development program.

Youth Services Division

ALTAMED Health Services Corporation
249 East Pomona Boulevard
Monterey Park, CA 91755
(323) 278-4245

Satellite Office:

3420 Martin Luther King Boulevard
Lynwood, CA 90262
(310) 605-0339

El Nido Family Centers

500 Shatto Place, Suite 425
Los Angeles, CA 90020
(213) 384-1600

Satellite Office:

110 North La Brea, Suite 420
Inglewood, CA 90301
(310) 677-6014

Teen Family Services

Foothill Family Services
2500 East Foothill Boulevard, Suite 300
Pasadena, CA 91107
(626) 564-1613

Satellite Offices:

West Covina Center
1720 West Cameron Avenue, Suite 100
West Covina, CA 91790
(626) 338-9200

El Monte Center
11429 Valley Boulevard
El Monte, CA 91731-3229
(626) 442-8391

Project NATEEN
Childrens Hospital Los Angeles
4610 Hollywood Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90027
(323) 669-5981