



PARENT RESOURCES

Finding child care can be a daunting task. It is not always easy to find the resources you need. We have compiled a list of resources that you may find useful. This list provides you with the answers to the frequently asked questions:

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How can I find help paying for child care?

Child Care Tax Credit

If you paid for care for a dependent child while you were working, looking for work or attending school, you may qualify for a credit on your income tax return. For information on how to apply for this credit, speak to your tax advisor, call the IRS at 800-829-4477 and choose topic 602, or visit <http://www.irs.gov/taxtopics/tc602.html>.

Earned Income Tax Credit

The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), sometimes called the Earned Income Credit (EIC), is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families. To qualify, taxpayers must meet certain requirements and file a tax return. For information on how to apply for this credit, speak to your tax advisor, call the IRS at 800-829-4477.

Child Care Subsidy

Depending on your family size and household income, you may be eligible for financial assistance to pay for child care. Please contact your local Department of Social Services for more information:

City of Alexandria

Office for Early Childhood Development

2525 Mount Vernon Ave.

Alexandria, VA 22301

Phone: 703-838-0750

Website:

http://alexandriava.gov/dhs/children_and_youth_services/oecd_childcare_asst_pgms.html

Arlington County

Child and Family Services Division

Department of Human Services

3033 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600A

Arlington, VA 22201

Phone: 703-228-1685

TTY: 703-228-1598

Website:

<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/HumanServices/services/family/HumanServicesServicesFamilyChildrenFamily.aspx#childcare>

Loudoun County

Family Services Unit

Department of Family Services

102 Heritage Way NE, Suite 200

Leesburg, VA 20176

Phone: 703-777-0353

Website: <http://www.loudoun.gov/services/childcare/help.htm>

City of Manassas
Department of Family Services
8955 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110
Phone: 703-361-8277
Website: <http://www.manassascity.org/index.asp?NID=68>

City of Manassas Park
Department of Social Services
1 Park Center Court
Manassas Park, VA 20111
Phone: 703-335-8898
Website:
http://www.cityofmanassaspark.us/Public_Documents/ManassasParkVA_SocialSvc/about

Prince William County
Department of Social Services
7987 Ashton Avenue, Suite 200
Manassas, VA 20109
Phone: 703-792-7500
Website: <http://www.co.prince-william.va.us/default.aspx?topic=040041002290003156>

Head Start and Early Head Start

Head Start provides grants to local public and private non-profit and for-profit agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills they need to be successful in school. The Early Head Start program serves children from birth to three years of age.

Head Start programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families.

To find a local Head Start or Early Head Start program in your area, use the on-line national Head Start Program Search Tool at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/hsb/hsweb/index.jsp> or call the Head Start Information and Publication Center toll-free at 866-763-6481.

What is quality child care?

Types of Child Care

There are two types of child care in Virginia: Center-Based Child Care; and Family Child Care. They both have their own unique advantages and disadvantages. Each type of care can be broken down further by legal definition as defined by Virginia

state law. The selection of the type of care chosen depends upon the families' needs and availability of child care.

Center-Based Child Care

- Licensed: A child care setting providing care for 2 or more children in a setting that is not a private home or 13 or more children in a setting that meets the "Minimum Standards for Licensed Child Day Centers" as established by the Child Day Care Council.
- License-exempt: A child care setting providing care for 2 or more children in a setting that is not a private home, license-exempt child care must still meet certain requirements of the law. The two types of care that meet the requirements for license-exempt are certified preschool and religious-exempt child care.
- Unregulated: A child care setting providing care for 2 or more children in a setting that is not a private home and does not have to meet licensing requirements. Factors such as the total amount of time of attendance and/or operation of programs such as camps and recreation programs determine whether the program must meet licensing requirements.

Family Child Care

- Licensed: A child care setting providing care for no more than 12 children, not including the provider's children or children living in the home, which meets the requirements of "Minimum Standards for Family Day Homes".
- System Licensed: Providers are screened, trained, and monitored by a state licensed system. Currently we have system licensed providers located at Infant Toddler Family Day Care located in Northern Virginia.
- Local agency approved: A child care setting providing care for no more than 5 children, not including the provider's children or children living in the home, which meets the requirements of standards used by local Department of Social Service offices set by the State Board of Social Services.
- Voluntarily registered: A child care setting providing care for no more than 5 children, not including the provider's children or children living in the home, which meets the requirements of "Voluntary Registration of Family Day Homes: Requirements for Providers". The Virginia Department of Social Services has additional information on voluntarily registered child care at the link below:

http://www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/child_care/unlicensed/vrfdh/index.html

- Unregulated: A child care setting providing care for no more than 5 children, not including the provider's children or children living in the home, with no more than 4 children under the age of two, to include the

provider's children and children living in the home. It is illegal to exceed this child care capacity in an unregulated family child care setting.

Adequate Supervision

Are the caregiver/teacher-to-child ratios appropriate and do they follow these recommended guidelines:

- ✓ One caregiver per three or four infants?
- ✓ One caregiver per three or four young toddlers?
- ✓ One caregiver per four to six older toddlers?
- ✓ One caregiver per six to nine preschoolers?¹⁹

When each adult is responsible for fewer children, your child can be provided with more one-on-one attention. Attention is crucial to your child's social and emotional development. It also helps adults get to know your child and plan activities based on his or her learning needs and interests. (In some states, programs are allowed to have each adult care for more children while the children are asleep or resting.)

Group Size

Is the number of children in each group limited? In family child care homes and centers, children are in groups of no more than:

- ✓ six to eight infants
- ✓ six to 12 younger toddlers
- ✓ eight to 12 older toddlers
- ✓ 12 to 20 preschoolers
- ✓ 20 to 24 school-agers²⁰

Small group sizes ensure your child will receive one-on-one attention and are part of a group that is easier to manage. Small group sizes are particularly important for young children who need more individual attention and can become overwhelmed in large groups.

Group sizes are considered the maximum number of children to be in a group, regardless of the number of adult staff.

Education of Child Care Staff

Have the adults been trained to care for children?

If a center,

- ✓ Does the director have a degree and some experience in caring for children?
- ✓ Do the teachers each have a credential or Associate's degree and experience in caring for children?

If a family child care home,

- ✓ Has the provider had specific training on children's development and experience caring for children?

Staff education is the best predictor of the quality of an early childhood program. Adults with training in early childhood education provide higher quality programs for your child, implement more appropriate activities, and do a better job of preparing your child for school.

Accreditation

Is the program accredited by a national organization?

National accreditation is a process that typically requires self-study, feedback from families, and a validation visit by an outside organization. Participating in this process increases program quality. The stamp of approval of an outside organization means the program has received feedback on its performance by an outside entity. Accrediting agencies include the National Association for the Education of Young Children, National Association for Family Child Care, National After School Association, National Early Childhood Program Accreditation, and National Accreditation Commission for Early Care and Education Programs.

Questions to Consider When Searching for Child Care

- What training does the provider have?
- Is the provider or center accredited?
- What activities are offered?
- Are the toys age-appropriate?
- What is the daily schedule?
- Is the facility safe and healthy?
- Does the program work well with parents?
- Are families involved in the program?
- Is there an open door policy?
- Do I trust this person to care for my child?
- Will my child be comfortable and happy here?
- Has my child visited the child care setting and had a successful experience?
- Are positive references available?
- Have I examined the policies, and do they fit with my needs and the needs of my child?
- Have I reviewed the facility inspection reports on the VDSS Web site?

Forms and Checklists

[Choosing Quality Child Care: Building Virginia's Future, Child by Child, Day by Day](#) from the Virginia Department of Social Services was designed for parents searching for high quality child care. The guide is available online at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/publications.cgi>. It includes information

about child care settings, provider characteristics, touring child care facilities, and questions to ask when interviewing and rating providers.

[Is This the Right Place for My Child?: 38 Research-Based Indicators of High-Quality Child Care](#) was developed by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) to help parents in their search for child care. The booklet is available online at http://naccrra.org/parent/quality_indicators.php. A [checklist](#) for parents is included. It discusses the importance and relevance of each research-based question used to evaluate child care programs.

Special Education Resources

Special Education Parent Resource Centers offer workshops and training sessions, parent support groups, and in-person and telephone support and information.

City of Alexandria Parent Resource Center
Jefferson-Houston School for Arts and Academics
1501 Cameron Street
Alexandria, VA 22314-2702
Phone: 703-706-4552
Website: <http://www.acps.k12.va.us/prc/index.php>

Arlington Public Schools Special Education Parent Resource Center
Clarendon Education Center
2801 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 312
Arlington, VA 22201-2868
Phone: 703-228-7239
Website: http://www.arlington.k12.va.us/stud_serv/special_ed/prc/index.shtml

Loudoun Parent Resource Center
Douglass Support Facility
55 Plaza Street
Leesburg, VA 20175
Phone: 703-771-6765
Website: <http://cmsweb1.loudoun.k12.va.us/50911551916465/site/default.asp>

Manassas City Public Schools
Department of Special Education
9000 Tudor Lane
Manassas, VA 20110
Phone: 703-257-8800
Website: <http://www.manassas.k12.va.us/instruct/speced/SPED1.htm>

Manassas Park
Administrative Offices
One Park Center Court, Suite A
Manassas Park, VA 20111
Phone: 703-335-8850

Prince William Parent Resource Center
Independent Hill School Board Complex
Special Education Modular 2
14800 Joplin Road
Manassas, VA 20112-3909
Phone: 703-791-8846
Website: http://www.pwcs.edu/departments/SPED/?PRC/PRC_opener.html

Where can I find licensing information?

Local Licensing Regulations

Local social service departments regulate the licensing of child care.

City of Alexandria
Office for Early Childhood Development
2525 Mount Vernon Ave.
Alexandria, VA 22301
Phone: 703-838-0750
Website:
http://alexandriava.gov/dhs/children_and_youth_services/oecd_childcare_provider.html

In the City of Alexandria, all persons providing child care for pay in their homes for one through five children are subject to local regulation. Registration packets can be obtained by calling the OECD at 703-838-0750.

Providers who care for six or more children are required to be licensed by the state and must also have a special use permit from the city. Contact the Northern Region licensing office at 703-934-1505 or visit the [state website](#) for more information. Information on the Special Use Permit is available through the Alexandria Planning and Zoning Office at 703-838-4666.

Arlington County
Child and Family Services Division
Department of Human Services
3033 Wilson Blvd., Suite 600A
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone: 703-228-1685
TTY: 703-228-1598
Website:
<http://www.arlingtonva.us/departments/HumanServices/services/family/HumanServicesServicesFamilyChildrenFamily.aspx#childcare>

The Child Care Office licenses day care facilities; monitors their compliance with local child care ordinances, state standards, and regulations; and provides education and training for providers of child care.

Loudoun County
Family Services Unit
Department of Family Services
102 Heritage Way NE, Suite 200
Leesburg, VA 20176
Phone: 703-777-0353
Website: <http://www.loudoun.gov/services/childcare/start.htm>

The Family Services Unit offers "The Business of Family Child Care," a training course designed to give individuals the tools necessary to develop a successful family child care business. This course provides an overview of requirements for business license, zoning permits, state licensing, and voluntary registration.

Participants are introduced to the Food Reimbursement Program for meals and snacks offered through the United States Department of Agriculture for children in family child care homes. A resource manual is provided which assist individuals in establishing the day-to-day operations of a family child care business.

City of Manassas
Department of Family Services
8955 Center Street
Manassas, VA 20110
Phone: 703-361-8277
Website: <http://www.manassascity.org/index.asp?SID=619#Childcare>

The Department of Family Services provides additional information about child care regulations in the City of Manassas.

City of Manassas Park
Department of Social Services
1 Park Center Court
Manassas Park, VA 20111
Phone: 703-335-8898
Website:
http://www.cityofmanassaspark.us/Public_Documents/ManassasParkVA_SocialSvc/about

The Department of Social Services provides additional information about child care regulations in the City of Manassas Park.

Prince William County
Department of Social Services
7987 Ashton Avenue, Suite 200
Manassas, VA 20109
Phone: 703-792-7500
Website: <http://www.pwcgov.org/docLibrary/PDF/003617.pdf>

"Steps to Becoming a Family Child Care Provider" from the Prince William Department of Social Services includes occupancy/zoning permit and licensing information.

State and Regional Licensing Offices

The Virginia Department of Social Services Division of Licensing Programs is responsible for licensure and inspections of child day centers, short-term child day centers, and family day homes.

For information on training or filing complaints, call 800-KIDS-LIL (800-543-7545), visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/division/license/district.html>, or contact your local licensing office:

Home Office

Virginia Department of Social Services
Division of Licensing Programs
7 North Eighth Street
Richmond, VA 23219-3301
Phone: 804- 726-7143

Fairfax Office

11320 Random Hills Road, Suite 200
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: 703-934-1505
Counties Served: Arlington, Loudoun, Fairfax
Cities Served: Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Leesburg

Warrenton Office

170 West Shirley Avenue, Suite 200
Warrenton, VA 20186
Phone: 540-347-6345
Counties Served: Caroline, Culpeper, Fauquier, King George, Prince William, Rappahannock, Spotsylvania, Stafford
Cities Served: Fredericksburg, Manassas, Manassas Park, Woodbridge

If the provider is Voluntarily Registered, call the Virginia Department of Social Services Voluntary Registration at 804-692-1795.

Staff to Child Ratios

For Family Day Homes:

This ratio includes the provider's own and resident children under eight years of age:

1. 1:4 children from birth through 15 months of age;
2. 1:5 children from 16 months through 23 months of age;
3. 1:8 children from two years through four years of age;
4. 1:16 children from five years through nine years of age; and
5. Children who are 10 years of age and older shall not count in determining the ratio of adults to children for staffing purposes.

When children are in mixed age groups, the provider shall apply the following point system in determining the need for an assistant. Each care giver shall not exceed 16 points. The provider's own and resident children under eight years of age count in point maximums:

1. Children from birth through 15 months of age count as four points each;
2. Children from 16 months through 23 months of age count as three points each;
3. Children from two years through four years of age count as two points each;
4. Children from five years through nine years of age count as one point each; and
5. Children who are 10 years of age and older count as zero points.

EXCEPTION: The point maximums for mixed age groups or the fixed adult-to-child ratios may be exceeded in one age group for no more than one child for up to one month from the date of the child's enrollment during transitional periods when there is turnover in children receiving care and when the ages of the child leaving and the child entering care do not match.

Source: http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/VA/va_4.pdf

For Family Day Systems:

Please contact [Infant Toddler Family Day Care](#) for more information at 703-352-3449 or info@infanttoddler.com.

For Child Day Centers:

1. For children from birth to the age of 16 months: one staff member for every four children;
2. For children 16 months old to two years: one staff member for every five children;
3. For two-year-old children: one staff member for every eight children effective June 1, 2006;
4. For children from three years to the age of eligibility to attend public school, five years by September 30: one staff member for every 10 children effective June 1, 2006;
5. For children from age of eligibility to attend public school through eight years, one staff member for every 18 children; and
6. For children from nine years through 12 years, one staff member for every 20 children effective June 1, 2006.
7. Notwithstanding subdivisions 4 and 5 of this subsection and subsection C of this section, the ratio for balanced mixed-age groupings of children shall be one staff member for every 14 children, provided:
 - a. If the program leader has an extended absence, there shall be sufficient substitute staff to meet a ratio of one staff member for every 12 children.
 - b. The center shall have readily accessible and in close classroom proximity auxiliary persons sufficient to maintain a 1:10 adult-to-child ratio for all three-year-olds who are included in balanced mixed-age groups to be available in the event of emergencies.

- c. The program leader has received training in classroom management of balanced mixed-age groupings of at least eight hours.

Source: http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/VA/va_center.pdf

For Religiously Exempt Child Day Centers:

The exemption law requires that the following staff/child ratios be maintained:

- One staff member to four children from zero to twenty-four months;
- One staff member to ten children ages twenty-four months to six years; and
- One staff member to twenty-five children ages six years and older.

Source: http://nrc.uchsc.edu/STATES/VA/va_1.htm#pgfld-746901

Where can I find important health and safety information?

Child Abuse and Neglect

The Virginia Department of Social Services operates a statewide Child Protective Services (CPS) hotline 24 hours a day, seven days per week to receive reports of child abuse and neglect and refer them to the appropriate local department of social services for investigation.

Hotline (in state): 800-552-7096

Hotline (out-of-state): 804-786-8536

Hotline (hearing-impaired): 800-828-1120

Additional information from Prevent Child Abuse Virginia is available online at <http://www.preventchildabuseva.org/emergency.htm>.

Poison Control Centers

Currently there are 61 Poison Centers in the United States. You can reach the Poison Centers closest to you by dialing 800-222-1222. When you dial this number, your call is routed to the Poison Center that serves your area. The call is toll free, and works from anywhere in the United States. Additional information is available from the National Capital Poison Center at <http://www.poison.org/home.asp>.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Care

The [Healthy Kids, Healthy Care](http://www.healthykids.us) website at <http://www.healthykids.us> was developed by the [National Resource Center for Health and Child Care and Early Education](http://www.nationalresourcecenter.org). The Healthy Kids, Healthy Care website targets parents of children in child care programs and offers answers to questions about health and safety issues.

Where can I find advocacy information?

Fairfax Futures

12011 Government Center Pkwy., Suite 920
Fairfax, VA 22035
Phone: 703-324-8126
Fax: 703-803-0116
Website: <http://www.fairfaxfutures.org/>

Fairfax Futures is dedicated to ensuring that our county's youngest children are well prepared to succeed in school and in life. In collaboration with partners across the county, we invest in early childhood education and school readiness by bringing attention and financial resources to sustain our region's future.

Parent Central

NACCRRRA
3101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 350
Arlington, VA 22201
Phone: 703-341-4100
Fax: 703-341-4101
Website: <http://highqualitychildcare.org/naccrra/join.html>

Parent Central is dedicated to helping parents access current information on children's issues as well as the most recent parenting resources. The Parent Central website offers information on child development, tips related to raising children, finding quality child care and more. You can sign up to receive Parent Central Express, the monthly e-newsletter chock full of tips for parents, activities, and ways to get connected in your community.

Voices for Virginia's Children

P.O. Box 64
Fairfax Station, VA 22039

Voices for Virginia's Children

4031 University Drive, Suite 111
Fairfax, VA 22030
Phone: 703-955-6325
Website: <http://www.vakids.org>

Voices for Virginia's Children is a statewide, privately funded, non-partisan awareness and advocacy organization that builds support for practical public policies to improve the lives of children. A recognized leader in child advocacy, Voices mobilizes support for initiatives by conducting research, developing policies, building coalitions, and helping people articulate their support for children. Currently, key issues include: early care and education; foster care and adoption; health, including mental health; and family economic success.

ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families

Policy Center
2000 M Street, NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 202-638-1144
E-mail: policycenter@zerotothree.org
Website: <http://www.zerotothree.org/policy>

The Policy Center at ZERO TO THREE is a research-based, non-partisan program that brings the voice of babies and toddlers to public policy to promote good health, strong families, and positive early learning experiences. The Policy Center:

- translates scientific research into language that is more accessible and tools that policymakers can use to inform more effective policies;
- partners with states and communities to build effective early childhood systems;
- cultivates leadership in states and communities; and
- studies and shares promising state and community strategies.

Where can I find other human services information?

The Virginia Department of Social Services provides additional information and referral resources at 800-230-6977 on such topics as: health care costs, utility cut-offs, drug or alcohol abuse, safe drinking water, pre-natal care, and services for someone with disabilities.