



the region's leading resource
in early education and care

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4C strives to provide high quality service to all its customers and clients.
Should you have a comment or concern about our service, please contact:
Chief Operating Officer, 4C, 1924 Dana Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45207.



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SELECTING A Quality Program



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4C for Children offers child care referrals. We do not make recommendations. We help parents find child care options and offer information on how to choose quality care.

Parents know their children's needs better than anyone, so child care decisions are best made by parents. Remember to look, listen and ask! Be sure to visit and interview several child care providers before making a selection. Ask questions and check references before leaving a child in care.

Parents are fully responsible for making the right choice in child care. 4C cannot guarantee any child care provider or child care setting. For questions or concerns, please contact us at the 4C office nearest you.

Finding a quality care and education program for your child is very important. This brochure will help you know what to look for when you search for a good program. Talk to several centers or school-age programs to get basic information about their programs. Ask about the hours and days of operation, the ages of children served and the cost of each program. Consider whether the location is convenient to your home or job. For a school-age child, consider whether there is school bus service from the school to the program. Make appointments with those that sound most promising. Try to spend at least one hour at each center when the children are there. Evaluate each program using the checklist in this brochure. Visit at least two or three programs. Keep in mind what is best for your child and family's needs. Choose carefully.

PROGRAMS AVAILABLE

Child Care Centers are for children of various ages. Most serve infants, toddlers, preschoolers and school-agers. Centers generally operate 11 hours a day, five days a week, year-round.

Preschool/Nursery Schools Programs are usually for children age three to five. Most operate half-day sessions during the school year. The number of days per week varies.

School-Age Programs are often found in schools, YMCAs, recreation centers, community centers or churches. These programs may offer before and/or after school options, tutoring, or care during school holidays and summer break.

QUALITY INDICATORS

4C encourages families to ask early education programs whether they have earned or are working toward a national accreditation or a state quality rating. These voluntary quality indicators can help families identify quality care. Accredited or rated programs have fewer children per classroom, staff with training in child development, safe and healthy environments and quality curriculum and administrative practices.

National accreditation: The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and other organizations measure programs against national best-practice standards.

State quality-rating systems: Step Up To Quality in Ohio and STARS for KIDS NOW in Kentucky award up to three stars in Ohio and up to four stars in Kentucky to programs achieving levels of quality above licensing requirements.

For details on additional accreditations and a listing of recognized programs, visit www.4cforchildren.org/recognition.

REGULATION

Licensing does not guarantee quality care for your child. The State of Ohio and the State of Kentucky require licensing for most child care centers and preschools. Not all programs are required to be licensed to operate legally. Many school-age programs in these states are not required to be licensed. For more information, contact your state at:

Ohio: 513-551-1957
www.jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/

Kentucky: 502-564-2800, ext. 3305
www.chfs.ky.gov/dcbs/dcc/

STAFF TO CHILD RATIOS AND GROUP SIZES

The states of Ohio and Kentucky and the City of Cincinnati require by law minimum staff-to-child ratios and group sizes for programs. The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National After School Association both have set higher standards for accredited programs.

State of Ohio Requirements

Age	Ratio	Group Size
Birth–12 mos.	1:5	10
	1:6	12
12–18 mos.	1:6	12
18–30 mos.	1:7	14
30–36 mos.	1:8	16
3 years	1:12	24
4–5 years	1:14	28
K–11 years	1:18	36
11–14 years	1:20	40

State of Kentucky Requirements

Age	Ratio	Group Size
Birth–12 mos.	1:5	10
12–24 mos.	1:6	12
2–3 years	1:10	20
3–4 years	1:12	24
4–5 years	1:14	28
5–7 years	1:15	30
7 yrs. and older in before and after school	1:25	30
7 yrs. and older full day	1:20	30

City of Cincinnati Requirements

Age	Ratio	Group Size
4 weeks–18 mos.	1:4	8
3–18 mos.	1:4	12
18–36 mos.	1:5	14
3–5 years	1:10	20
5 years, not Kindergarten	1:14	28
Kindergarten and older	1:15	30

SUBSIDY

Both the State of Ohio and the State of Kentucky offer child care subsidy programs. These programs reduce the cost of child care for low-income families. Eligibility for subsidy varies by state. Private subsidy, based on income, may be available for some families who do not meet state guidelines. Eligibility for private subsidy varies by program. For more information, contact 4C at 513-758-1351 in Ohio or 859-781-3511 in Kentucky.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR...

STAFF

- Director and head teacher have college-level training in how children learn and grow.
- Staff are warm, caring, patient, friendly, positive and creative.
- Teachers stay employed long enough so that children can form a relationship with them.
- Staff talk to, laugh with and listen to children.
- Staff work as a team.
- Teachers are involved with the children.
- Staff make families feel welcome and at ease.
- Staff use positive ways to guide the behavior of children.
- Staff set limits for children that are suitable for their age.
- Staff help children make informed and responsible choices.
- Staff use positive words of encouragement.
- Adults comfort angry, sad or frightened children in a caring, supportive way.
- Individual needs of children are being met.
- Adults use children's names in conversations.



ENVIRONMENT

- Space is safe and free of potential hazards.
- Space is clean, attractive, well lit, roomy and comfortable.
- Floors are both carpeted and tiled to provide a range of experiences.
- Area is set up for each child's belongings, including a change of clothing.
- Space accommodates children with special needs.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

- Written policy excludes sick children from attending the center.
- Written policy calls for isolating a child that becomes sick during the day.
- Written policy regulates for storing and giving medicine to children.
- First aid kits are in each classroom and are easy to reach.
- First-aid trained staff member is at the center at all times.
- Emergency and exit plans are posted and drills are practiced.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS

- Parents are asked to offer ideas, take part in the program or become involved in planning.
- Newsletters and information boards are used to keep families up to date.
- Parent conferences are held on a regular basis.
- Notes are often sent to families about their child's successes or needs.
- Families receive notes about special events, trips or problems.
- Family programs are planned to meet the needs of children, parents or families.

POLICIES

- Current state license (and city license, if required) along with compliance report are displayed.
- Parents are allowed to visit any time.
- Written policy that ensures children will be treated with respect in all matters.
- Written policy that does not allow physical punishment. Discipline is handled in a positive way.
- Daily child care hours and holiday hours are clearly posted.
- Rules about vacations and other child absences are clearly stated.
- Parents are informed of any special events, visitors or trips.
- Parent handbooks are made available to all parents at time of enrollment.





Infant/Toddler CHECKLIST

STAFF

- Staff have training in how children grow and learn and have experience working with infants and toddlers.
- Staff to child ratios are kept at all times. State ratios are the law. See 4C brochure. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends the following staff to child ratios for higher quality programs:
 - Birth–12 months: one staff for every four infants, for no more than eight children
 - 12–24 months: one staff for every four toddlers, for no more than 12 children
 - 24–30 months: one staff for every five toddlers, for no more than ten children
 - 30–36 months: one staff for every six toddlers, for no more than 12 children
 - 36–48 months: one staff for every seven toddlers, for no more than 14 children

FEEDING ROUTINES

- Babies are held while being bottle-fed.
- Children are fed according to their needs and schedules.
- Bottles are kept in the refrigerator until needed, then used promptly.
- Sippy cups and bottles are labeled with child's name.
- Babies and toddlers are encouraged to feed themselves.
- Finger foods are encouraged for older infants and young toddlers.

DIAPERING & TOILET ROUTINES

- Diapering and toilet areas are clean, free from odor and well ventilated. These areas are also located away from feeding areas.
- Diapers are changed when soiled and babies are cleaned very well.
- Diapers are thrown away in a closed container.
- Changing table has a secure strap that holds baby safely, and is used every time.
- Changing table surface is cleaned using a germ killing cleaner after each baby is changed.
- Caregivers' and babies' hands are washed with soap and water after each diaper change or use of the toilet.

- Toilet training begins only when the child shows an interest and has the ability to understand the process.
- Parents are involved in the decision to begin toilet training for their children.
- Toilet training is a positive, pleasant part of a toddler's day. Accidents are dealt with in a relaxed manner rather than with disapproval.

SLEEPING ROUTINES

- Infants are placed on their backs to sleep with firm bedding and no fluffy blankets, toys or pillows.
- Children are allowed to nap according to their own needs.
- Each child has a separate crib or cot.
- Nap areas are well monitored, quiet, darkened and separate from active areas.
- Bedding is changed and laundered daily or more often as needed.

ENVIRONMENT & PLAY

- Infants are out of their cribs when they are not asleep and have room to move around safely and play with interesting things.
- Low barriers separate walking infants from those playing on the floor.
- Infants can see a variety of colors, shapes and objects and can listen to music and other sounds.
- Infants and toddlers are offered different toys and supplies that promote learning for their age group. Items should include art supplies, puzzles, books, musical instruments and small climbing structures.
- Ample high chairs with seat belts, infant seats and strollers are on site.
- Furniture and outdoor play equipment are sized for infants and toddlers.
- Caregivers play with, sing to, hold, and cuddle each child often throughout the day.

FAMILY COMMUNICATIONS

- Notes are sent home daily about each child's eating, sleeping and diaper/toilet schedules.

WARNING SIGNALS

- Center does not encourage parents to observe.
- Children are confined to swings, seats or cribs for more than thirty minutes.
- Babies are not held while being bottle-fed.