



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.



Printed with Child Care Development Fund
dollars made available through a contract with
the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family
Services - Division of Child Care.



Funded in part by the City of Cincinnati.
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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.





School-age Care CHECKLIST

STAFF

- Staff have training in how children grow and learn and have experience working with school-age children.
- Staff to child ratios are maintained at all times. State ratios are the law. See 4C brochure for details. For higher quality programs, the National AfterSchool Association (NAA) recommends one adult caregiver for every 10 to 15 children, ages six and older, with no more than 30 children.
- Adults are positive role models for children.
- Staff are energetic and maintain a safe place, while being flexible and fun.

PROGRAM

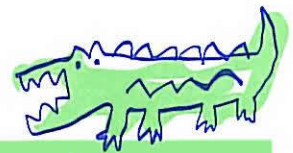
- Schedules and lesson plans are posted and show daily offered activities.
- Activities are balanced between activities led by staff and activities that are child-initiated.
- Teachers meet regularly to plan and evaluate the program.
- Children are well supervised.
- Public resources and services are used to enhance learning and the program.
- Children choose their own age-suitable activities and toys.
- Different toys and supplies are offered that promote learning, such as puzzles, books and games.
- Time for talking, reading, listening to music, homework, or alone play is offered.
- Activities are interesting, fun and challenging. Children learn by doing.
- Children work together on projects and games.
- Children are encouraged to solve problems.

ENVIRONMENT

- Outdoor play area is safe, both shaded and open, with room to run and climb.
- Group games and sports are offered that are age-suitable.
- Supplies and equipment for indoor and outdoor play have a variety of age-suitable choices.
- Toys, games and materials are plentiful so that children do not have to wait to use them.
- Activities include games, arts and crafts, sports and dramatic play for children of all ages.

MEALS

- Meals and snacks are well balanced, nutritious and low in fat, sugar and salt.
- Staff sit with children during mealtimes to promote language and social skills.
- Children serve themselves at snack and mealtime.
- Menus for meals and snacks are posted.



WARNING SIGNALS

- Program does not encourage parents to observe.
- Children move about for 30 minutes or more without interaction with staff or being involved in an activity.
- Staff spend most of their time scolding or controlling children.