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Call LOCATE: Child Care.

You don't have to do it alone. Take advantage of the child care resources and expertise in your community by contacting your local child care resource center (CCR&R), listed on the back of this brochure.

At the CCR&R, LOCATE: Child Care counselors will provide you with child care options near your home, work, school, or bus route. Child care options on this list will meet the requirements (location, hours, cost, special requirements concerning pets, smoking, etc.) you have specified. This is a free service.

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LOCATE: Child Care at the Regional Child Care Resource Centers

Telephone Numbers

Anne Arundel County	(410) 222-1728
Baltimore City	(410) 539-2209
Baltimore County	(410) 288-5600
Chesapeake (Upper Shore) (Kent, Queen Anne's, Dorchester, Talbot, Caroline)	(888) 406-1453
Frederick/Carroll Counties	(301) 695-4508 or (877) 230-7422
Harford/Cecil Counties	(888) 244-5383
Howard County	(410) 313-1930
Lower Shore (Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester)	(410) 548-3279
Montgomery County	(240) 777-3130
Prince George's County	(301) 772-8400
Southern Maryland (Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's)	(301) 290-0045 or (866) 290-0045
Western Maryland (Allegany, Garrett, Washington)	(301) 733-6914 or (800) 924-9188

in Allegany and Garrett counties
Call your local child care resource center, listed above, to confirm the hours of LOCATE: Child Care for your region.



Friends of the Family, Inc.



608 Water Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21202-4079
Phone: 410-752-7588
www.mdchildcare.org



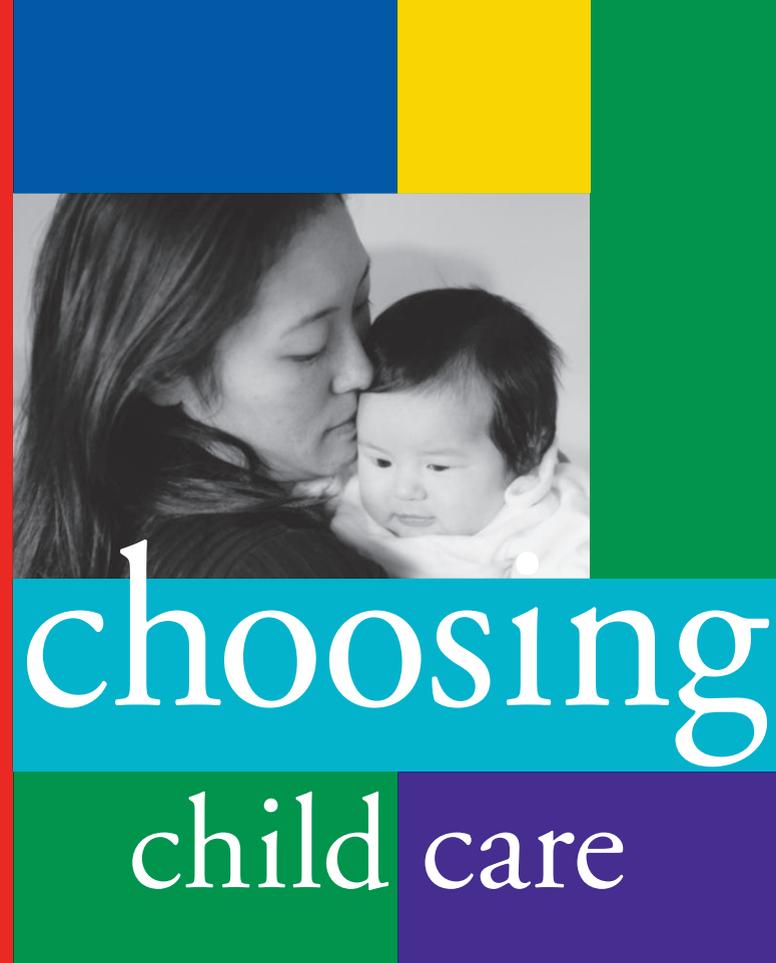
MARYLAND
COMMITTEE
FOR
CHILDREN

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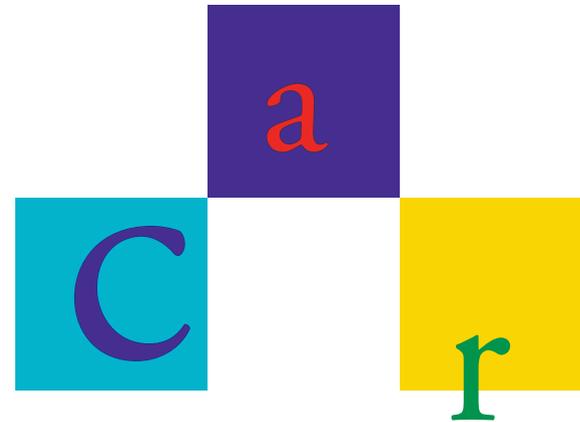


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Child care can be a wonderful and enriching experience for your child.



A guide to finding the right care for your child



A child care provider who is warm and supportive will help your child learn by providing activities that are right for your child at each age and stage of development.

Choosing child care is a difficult task – and one that only you, the parent, can do. But, with care, you can select an arrangement that will add positive experiences to your child's life. The following steps are designed to help you collect the information you need to make a well-informed decision about care for your child.



2 Interview.

Call all the names of the homes or centers you received. Let them know you received their names from LOCATE: Child Care. Below, you will find some questions that you may want to ask.

Telephone Questions

- What time do you open and close?
- How many children do you care for and what are their ages?
- Are the groups small enough to provide one-on-one attention to each child during the day?
- Do you serve meals or do I need to bring food for my child?
- When I have time, may I stay and watch my child play?

3 Visit.

Visit at least 3 programs. Take your child with you. When you go, look at the area, the caregiver(s), and the children. Here is a list of things to check:

Look at the Area

- Does it look clean and safe for every age child there? For example, is there a crib for each infant?
- Is there enough space inside and out so all the children can have room to play?
- Do the toys and materials support different types of play, such as imaginative play, building projects, and arts and crafts?



- Is there a time and place for both quiet and active play?
- Ask to see the provider's license.

Look at the Caregiver

- Did the caregiver use a calm voice and talk to the children on their level?
- Am I comfortable with the way the caregiver disciplines the children? Does the caregiver praise accomplishments and help resolve conflicts?
- Does the caregiver seem to enjoy and respect the children?
- If your child is an infant, does the caregiver connect with your baby by gently holding and talking to the baby? Will the baby also get attention when she/he is not crying?

Look at the Children

- Are the children doing activities that suit their age and stage of development? Activities that are too hard will be discouraging, but children learn from new activities that are interesting and a little bit challenging.
- Are they given a chance to make choices about activities that interest them?
- Do the children have a daily schedule which allows for indoor and outdoor play, nap time if appropriate, and time for both individual play and group activities?
- Are the infants held and talked to in a reassuring way that will help them learn to trust that their needs will be met?



4 Ask.

Ask the caregiver if you may talk with other parents who use that home or center. If you do talk with other parents, here are some questions that might help you.

Questions for Other Parents

- Does your child enjoy going there?
- What do you like most about this child care?
- What are some of the things that you don't like?
- If you had to find care again, would your child still go there?

5 Decide.

- Go over your notes from all the questions you have asked.
- Decide which family child care home or center seems the best for you and your child.
- If you feel unsure about the program, visit again. If you are unhappy with all the choices, call LOCATE: Child Care again for more names. If care is hard to find, you may need to try a new area.



6 Act.

Act on the suggestions provided below, which are designed to help build a sound long-term relationship between you and the provider:

- Sign a contract before you start care. These are the items to include:
 1. The hours the program opens and closes.
 2. The days the program will be closed for holidays and vacation.
 3. The things you will need to bring to the program.
- The best way to feel comfortable in a new program is to get involved. Attend parent meetings, help with arts and crafts projects, or bring in special snacks.
- If you are pleased with the care your child receives, tell the provider! Good parent/provider communication benefits your child and is the key to a healthy relationship.

7 Help!

- If you have concerns about the way your child is treated, speak to the caregiver. If you feel the program is not operating according to regulations, contact your regional Office of Child Care. The LOCATE counselor can tell you the number.
- Help is just a phone call away. If you have any questions, call LOCATE: Child Care at your local child care resource center, listed on the back of this brochure.

