



What You Need to Know When Choosing a Child Care Provider

Choosing the right child care provider is one of the most important decisions a family can make. The Denver County Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) helps parents who qualify for the program and live in Denver County afford a child care provider of their choice – one they feel best suits the needs of their children.

CCAP is a federally funded program that helps eligible low-income families pay for child care.

"Child care is an important piece of children's healthy development, school readiness and school success," said Gaye Horne, coordinator for Denver Child Care Resource and Referral Agency.

CCAP allows parents to choose their own CCAP child care provider. They have a choice of a licensed day care provider, a licensed home provider or what is known as an exempt provider -- a family member, friend or neighbor who does not necessarily need to be licensed but does need to complete and pass a fingerprint and background check to participate as a CCAP provider. Finding the best provider for one's family takes research.

The Child Care Aware Organization recommends that parents who are looking for child care visit a few facilities and home providers to observe and ask questions. The Child Care Aware Organization also suggests the following when looking for at different child care providers:

Start looking as far in advance as you can. Contact your local Child Care Resource and Referral Agency to discuss options and answer questions. The number for the Denver County agency 2-1-1.

The following questions can help you get started:

- What are the licensing requirements in my area?
- How can I get information about complaints and licensing violations?
- Look at the child to adult ratios. Babies need an adult to child ratio of no more than 1:4 (one adult for four infants), while four-year-olds can do well with a ratio of 1:10 (one adult for ten children).
- Find out how many children are in the group. The smaller the group, the better.
- Ask about the caregivers' training and education.
- Think about what you saw at each visit and make the best choice for your child and family.
- The work isn't over when you find good care for your child. You and your child's caregiver are partners now. Here are some ways to be involved:
 - Have parent-caregiver meetings regularly, and ask questions.
 - Offer to volunteer time when needed.
 - Be there for your child's birthday party.
 - Visit your child at child care and read a book aloud.
 - Join in special events, like field trips.

"CCAP helps hard working parents afford quality child care," says Denver Human Services Executive Director Penny May. "Every child in our program receives care that promotes health, learning and creativity. Every parent can rest assured and go about their day knowing their child is safe and happy."

To qualify, parents must be working or in school and need child care services to support their efforts toward self-sufficiency. Applicants must provide verification of household income, address verification, Photo ID for adults and verification that children are permanent residents or citizens and their current immunization records.

CCAP applications are accepted anytime. Potential program applicants can call 720-944-KIDS to see if they qualify or visit www.denverccap.org for more information. Spanish speaking customer service representatives are available.