

# Child Care Assistance

Employment-Related Day Care Program  
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families



## Child care is one of the most important choices you will make

*Below are tips for finding, interviewing and choosing your child care provider.*

### 1 Interview child care providers. Call first and ask the following:

- Is there an opening for my child?
- What hours and days are you open?
- Where are you located?
- How much does care cost?
- Is financial assistance available?
- Do you accept the DHS childcare subsidy?
- Do you charge more than DHS will pay?
- How many children are in your care?
- What age groups do you serve?
- Do you provide transportation?
- Do you provide healthy meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snacks?
- Do the providers and other staff/substitutes have special qualifications or training?
- When can I come to visit?

### 2 Next, visit more than one provider and take the time to look for the following:

- Responsive, nurturing, warm interactions between the providers and children.
- Children who are happily involved in activities and comfortable with their provider.
- A clean, safe and healthy indoor and outdoor environment.
- A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks or climbing equipment. The kind of variety that your child will find interesting and will help their growth and development.
- Children getting individual attention.
- Set limits for children on time to watch TV or play with electronics.

### 3 Ask the provider:

- Can I visit at any time?
- How do you handle discipline?
- What do you do if a child is sick?
- Can I see a list of your closure dates?
- What would you do in case of an emergency?
- Do you require immunization of all children and staff?
- Do you have a substitute or backup caregiver?
- Where do children nap?
- Do you know babies should sleep on their backs?
- What training have you had?
- May I see a copy of your Office of Child Care certification or registration?



#### 4 Check references. Ask other parents or guardians:

- Was the child care provider reliable every day?
- How did the child care provider discipline your child?
- Did your child enjoy the child care?
- Would you recommend the child care provider?
- Was the child care provider respectful of your values and culture?
- How did the child care provider respond to you as a parent?
- If your child is no longer with the child care provider, why did you leave?

**You can make another visit if you like what you've seen and heard.**

#### 5 Ask the local Child Care Resource & Referral office or the Office of Child Care:

- What regulations should the child care provider meet?
- Are there complaints about the child care provider I am considering? How do I find out about them? You can call the Office of Child Care at 503-947-1400 or 1-800-566-6616; or visit <https://www.oregon.gov/OCC/Pages/complaints.aspx>.

#### 6 Make a decision for quality care. From what you heard and saw, ask yourself the following:

- Which child care should I choose so my child will be happy and grow?
- Which child care provider can meet the needs of my child?
- Are the provider's values similar to mine?
- Is the care available, affordable and does it meet my family's needs and budget?
- Do I feel good about my decision?

**Quality child care** helps your child's healthy development and success in school. A quality child care setting offers a variety of child development activities important to your child's brain development and lifelong learning.

If you have a co-pay it may be lower if you use a provider who is Spark rated. A Spark rated provider has training to help children get ready and be successful in school. To find a Spark rated provider go to 211info at <http://211info.org>. You may also dial 211 toll-free; text your ZIP code to 898211; or email [help@211info.org](mailto:help@211info.org). 211info representatives can assist with the following:



- Child care;
- Behavioral strategies;
- School readiness tips;
- Early childhood development;
- Family stress and support;
- Parenting classes;
- Local playgroups;
- Foster care support; and
- Basic family resources.

For more information about the DHS child care program go to <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/assistance/child-care/pages/index.aspx>.



You can get this document in other languages, large print, braille or a format you prefer. Call 503-378-3486, or email [CHILDCARE.policy@state.or.us](mailto:CHILDCARE.policy@state.or.us). We accept all relay calls or you can dial 711.