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childcarechoices.me

Other Resources

Using the search function on Child Care Choices is just one step in the process of finding child care. The Child Care Choices website has many more resources to help you with your search and to help you make a decision. You can find information about:

- The Step ratings of *Quality for ME*, Maine's quality rating and improvement system
- Checklists to use when visiting programs
- Links to Maine resources, including programs to help pay for child care
- Information for families about child development and care for children with special needs



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**Your Resource for
Searching for Child Care
in Maine**



What Is Child Care Choices?

Child Care Choices is Maine's online resource for helping families search for and learn about their options for child care.

Child Care Choices is operated by Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network, in partnership with Maine's Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services.

You can use the search tool to look for child care that will meet your family's needs. On the website you can learn about:

- The types of child care in Maine and resources to help you choose a program that's right for your family
- *Quality for ME*, Maine's quality rating and improvement system
- Child care licensing information
- Resources for families, including if you need help paying for child care

Types of Care

These are the types of programs that are included in the search function on Child Care Choices:

Family Child Care: These programs operate within a private home and often serve multiple age groups. In Maine, if an individual is providing child care for more than two children who are unrelated to them, that person(s) must be licensed by Maine's Division of Licensing and Regulatory Services. The maximum number of children allowed in a family child care home in Maine is 12; additional staff may be required, depending on the number and ages of children in care.

Child Care Center: These programs operate in a facility designated for the care of children. Children are often grouped according to age in child care centers. In Maine, facilities providing care for more than 3 children must be licensed; staffing requirements vary based on the total number and ages of children in the program.

Nursery School: These programs offer programming for children for no more than 3 ½ hours per day. Some nursery schools offer both a morning and afternoon session, but children may only attend one session per day. Nursery schools typically serve preschool-aged children, though some offer programming for toddlers.

Head Start: Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth to five from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social, and emotional development. Head Start serves preschool-age children and their families. Many Head Start programs also provide Early Head Start, which serves infants, toddlers, pregnant women and their families who have incomes below the federal poverty level. Programs may be full-day or part-day.

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How to Search

The search feature allows you to search by:

- Type of care (family child care or child care center)
- Address and distance
- City
- Zip code
- Step rating with *Quality for ME*
- Ages served

The results are provided on a map and as a downloadable list that includes:

- Program name, address, and phone number
- Program type
- Step rating with *Quality for ME*
- Ages served
- Driving directions
- Licensing details

If you have questions about the child care search or if you need further assistance, please call 1-877-680-5866 to speak with the Child Care Resource and Referral Department at the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services.

Contact Us

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