

About Child Care in Arlington



Research tells us our children’s healthy development depends on safe and positive experiences during the first few years of life. If you are a parent who works during these early years, choosing good child care is one of the most important decisions you will ever make for your child (Child Care Aware).

All children—especially infants and toddlers—need a child care setting where they can thrive with caregivers who understand how to promote their healthy growth and development. That’s because young children need a schedule that is responsive to their needs, with appropriate stimulation and time to rest. They need to be talked to and played with. They need love and attention. And they need the opportunity to form the kind of comfortable, secure relationship with a caregiver that will nurture their healthy emotional development (Zero to Three).

Key Resources

Arlington Child Care Licensing Office

- The Arlington Child Care Licensing Office licenses and monitors child care centers (including preschools, cooperative preschools, and parent’s day out programs) and family day care homes
- Visit <https://family.arlingtonva.us/child-care/>

Arlington Licensed Child Care Directory

- Arlington maintains a searchable directory that includes child care centers and family day care homes licensed by Arlington County
- Visit <https://family.arlingtonva.us/childcare-directory/>

Local Inspection Reports

- You can request local inspection reports by calling the Child Care Licensing Office at (703) 228-1685

State of Virginia Child Care Directory

- The state maintains a searchable directory that includes all state-licensed Arlington providers as well as child care slots available through Arlington Public Schools and religious-exempt programs
- Visit <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/search/cc.cgi>

Child Care Subsidies

- Subsidies are available to qualifying households
- Visit <https://publicassistance.arlingtonva.us/child-care-subsidy-2/>

Tips for Finding the Right Child Care for Your Child

Start Early

Start looking as far in advance as you can. No matter what type of care you are considering – a child care center or care in someone else’s home – finding the right child care option can take some time.

Visit and Ask Questions

Visit the child care options you are considering. Find out about these key indicators of quality:

- Teacher-to-Child Ratio
- Group Size
- Caregiver Qualifications
- Turnover

Make a Choice

Think about what you saw at each visit, and make the best choice for your child and family.

Stay Involved

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, like participating in clean-up days, or fixing broken toys.
- 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, Career Day, Black History Month, or other holidays.

Even if you can’t get time off from work during the day, you can still check in at drop-off and pick-up times. Ask the caregiver how things are going, and how your child is doing.

Visiting and participating in events at your child’s provider sends a strong message. It tells your child and your child’s caregiver that you think what your child is doing and learning is important.

