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Illinois Child Care Licensing Standards
Definitions

In Illinois, the Child Care Act of 1969 (as amended) is the law which requires the licensing of child care centers, family child care homes and group child care homes. Child care licensing is a form of consumer protection. The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) regulates child care programs by requiring child care providers to meet minimum health and safety standards.

A DCFS license must be on display at the center or home. State licensing representatives annually monitor each child care program to determine if they meet minimum health and safety requirements and to ensure compliance with the standards.

Programs should distribute a summary of the licensing standards to parents or guardians at the time of enrollment. A child care center, family child care and group child care home license must be renewed every three (3) years.

Definition of Terms
Child Care Center - a facility that cares for more than three children in a setting that is not a family home. Child care centers, nursery schools, preschools, and school age programs are included in the definition.

Family Child Care Home - the care of up to twelve children in a family home, including the provider’s own children, related and unrelated, under age thirteen.

Group Child Care Home - the care of up to sixteen children in a family home, including the provider’s own children, related and unrelated under age thirteen.

License-Exempt Child Care - care that does not require a license from Illinois DCFS to operate. Facilities or programs exempt from licensing include:

- care provided in the child’s own home with three or fewer children present including the child care provider’s own children under the age of thirteen, or one sibling group.
- family child care for up to three children, including the provider’s own children under the age of thirteen, or the children of one other family.
- programs serving children three years of age and older, which are operated by public or private elementary schools, or schools which are registered and/or recognized with the Illinois State Board of Education or accredited by a national organization that regularly recognizes or accredits schools.
- part-day programs operated by a religious organization or social service agency in which no child is cared for more than ten hours in a seven-day week.
- programs conducted on federal government premises.
- special activities programs operating on a short term basis.
- programs providing care for transient children while the parents are on the premises.

For further information on licensing contact the local DCFS Family Development Unit at 618-257-7500.
Five Steps to Choosing Quality Child Care

1. LOOK
Begin by visiting several child care homes or centers. On each visit, think about your first impression. But don’t stop there.
• Does the place look safe for your child?
• Do the caregivers/teachers who will care for your child enjoy talking and playing with children?
• Do they talk with each child at the child’s eye level? Are there plenty of toys and learning materials within a child’s reach?

You should always visit a home or center more than once. Stay as long as possible so you can get a good feel for what the care will be like for your child. Even after you start using the child care, continue to visit from time to time.

2. COUNT
Count the number of children in the group. Then count the number of staff members caring for them. Obviously, the fewer the number of children for each adult, the more attention your child will get. A small number of children per adult is most important for babies and younger children. Be sure, that at the very least, the DCFS Standards are being met.

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<td><strong>Infants</strong></td>
<td>1 adult per 4 children</td>
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<td><strong>Toddlers</strong></td>
<td>1 adult per 5 children</td>
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<td><strong>Preschoolers</strong></td>
<td>1 adult per 10 children</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School-Agers</strong></td>
<td>1 adult per 20 children</td>
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Note: An individual doing licensed-exempt child care in his/her home may not care for more than 3 children, or 1 family of children.

3. LISTEN
What does the child care setting sound like? Do the children sound happy and involved? What about the teachers’ voices? Do they seem cheerful, patient and happy to be there? The teachers should be having positive conversations and interactions with the children. What is the noise level of the classroom or home? A place that’s too quiet may mean not enough activity. A place that’s too noisy may mean there is a lack of control.

4. ASK
It’s very important that your child’s caregiver has the knowledge and experience to give them the care and education they need. Ask about the education background and experience of all staff: the program director, caregivers, teachers, and any other adults who will have contact with your child in the home or center. Find out about the special training or credentials each one has and whether the program is licensed, has an ExceleRate Illinois Circle of Quality, and/or nationally accredited. Caregivers and teachers will be happy to have you ask these questions.

5. BE INFORMED
Find out more about efforts in your community to improve the quality of child care. Is your caregiver involved in these activities? Examples include ExceleRate Illinois, local training events, Accreditation and Illinois Early Childhood Education Credentials.

Do you need help searching for child care? The CCR+R Program has a Parent Referral Specialist to assist you in getting a list of child care referrals in your community. For more information, contact: Children’s Home + Aid, CCR+R Program 1-800-467-9200, ext. 390
ExceleRate Illinois is a statewide quality rating and improvement system designed to make continuous quality improvement an everyday priority among early learning providers. The program establishes standards for helping infants, toddlers and preschool age children develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. It provides a framework for early learning professionals to identify opportunities for improvement, increase their skills and take steps to make positive changes.

As a parent, you have the most influence on your child’s development from infancy to adulthood. And one of the first important decisions you will make is choosing the best early learning setting (sometimes referred to as child care, pre-K or preschool) for your child’s birth to preschool years.

ExceleRate Illinois helps you find an early learning provider who makes quality a priority.

By supporting and recognizing continuous quality improvement in early learning, ExceleRate Illinois provides you with an objective way to make quality a part of your decision making. Ultimately, the system helps you feel confident that your child has the best opportunity to learn and grow.
ExceleRate Illinois also recognizes early learning providers for their ongoing efforts to improve the quality of their care by awarding Circle of Quality designations:

The Licensed Circle of Quality tells you that the program meets state licensing standards for quality. It is the foundation for quality.

The Bronze Circle of Quality recognizes the qualifications of program staff. It tells you that the program has completed ExceleRate Illinois trainings, have met qualifications and are engaged in continuous quality improvement.

The Silver Circle of Quality recognizes that the program has met quality goals. Silver Circle programs meet or go beyond quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. Programs are actively engaged in continuous quality improvement.

The Gold Circle of Quality recognizes programs that meet or go beyond the highest quality goals. Gold Circle programs have met the highest quality standards in three areas: learning environment and teaching quality; administrative standards; and training & education. Programs are actively engaged in continuous quality improvement.

To learn more about ExceleRate Illinois, and to search for programs in your area who have a Circle of Quality, visit the website: www.excelerateillinois.com

Source: www.excelerateillinois.com
Accreditation - A Sign of Quality

Various independent accreditation programs have been developed to recognize quality in early care and education programs. Accreditation offers professional recognition and consumer distinction to providers who meet high standards through consistency and dedication.

The Accreditation process involves three distinct components: Self Study, Validation, and Review. The process of becoming an Accredited program is a commitment and an accomplishment.

Accreditation is intended for providers who demonstrate a commitment to reach beyond minimum state licensing requirements to achieve standards of excellence. All types of early care and education programs may voluntarily apply for accreditation. Accreditation processes and standards advocate optimal child development practices that result in high quality experiences for young children.

The accreditation process utilizes nationally recognized criteria for high quality early care and education programs.

Some well-known accreditation programs include, but are not limited to:

- NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children)
- NAC (National Accreditation Commission)
- NECPA (National Early Childhood Program Accreditation)
- NAFCC (National Association of Family Child Care)
- COA (Council on Accreditation)

When selecting a child care program, ask if the program is accredited or engaged in self-study. Accredited programs typically post their accreditation and licensing certificates for families to view.

For more information about accreditation or to locate an accredited program, please contact:

Children’s Home + Aid CCR+R Program at:
1-800-467-9200, ext. 390
or www.ChildrensHomeAndAid.org/CCRRSouthern
**Head Start**

Head Start and Early Head Start are comprehensive child development programs, which serve children from birth to five years of age, pregnant women, and their families. Both programs are child-focused and have the overall goal of increasing the school readiness of young children in low-income families. The Head Start program has a long tradition of delivering comprehensive and high quality services designed to foster healthy development in low-income children. Head Start grantee and delegate agencies provide a range of individualized services in the areas of education and early childhood development; medical, dental, and mental health; nutrition; and parent involvement. In addition, the entire range of Head Start services are responsive and appropriate to each child’s and family’s developmental, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage and experience.

Fore more information on Head Start and Early Head Start, and to find a Head Start Program near you, visit:


Or Call: 1-866-763-6481 (toll-free)

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**Illinois State Board of Education — Early Childhood**

The Illinois State Board of Education has identified early childhood education, birth through eight, as a priority area for educational leadership in Illinois. As a result the Illinois State Board of Education has established the Early Childhood Division which offers several early childhood initiatives:

- Preschool for All: Children ages 3-5 years of age
- Prevention Initiative for families and children birth through three years of age
- Early Childhood Special Educations: Children ages 3-5

These Early Childhood initiatives emphasize the relationship among early childhood education, parenting education and involvement, and future success in school.

For more information on these initiatives, contact your local school district or log on to the Illinois State Board of Education website: [www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/earlychi).
Using Family, Friends or Neighbors for Child Care

Using family, friends or neighbors to provide child care while you work or attend school may be an ideal child care solution. They may already know you and your child, they are often someone you already trust, and frequently they are more flexible and affordable than other child care options.

Maintaining a personal and/or professional relationship with your family, friend or neighbor caregiver is important. Most parents and family, friend or neighbor child care providers begin their child care arrangements with high hopes and warm feelings. However, using family, friends or neighbors for child care can become complex by complicating your personal relationship in unexpected ways.

Consider some of the following as you begin a business/professional relationship with your caregiver.

1. **Develop a contract agreement** including the amount you will pay and when; drop off and pick up times; vacation and holiday schedules; health and safety procedures; emergency information; behavior and discipline policies.

2. **Be clear about your expectations** regarding the child care arrangement. Do you want your caregiver running errands with your child? Do you want them cooking, doing laundry and cleaning their house while your child is there? Do you want them to care for other children?

3. **Communicate with your caregiver** weekly to make sure things are going smoothly and the arrangement is working for both of you.

4. **Extend courtesy, respect and appreciation** to your caregiver. Express your appreciation for the love and care that your child receives while in their care.

Some family, friend or neighbor caregivers will not accept money when caring for a relative. If you don’t pay your caregiver, then show your appreciation in non-monetary ways. If you do pay your caregiver, remember to keep accurate records and receipts if you plan to apply for the Earned Income and/or the Dependent Care Tax Credit.

Child Care Contracts

A clear agreement at the start of any child care relationship can reduce or prevent many misunderstandings between parents and child care providers. An agreement between child care providers and parents is called a contract. A written contract establishes clear expectations for everyone.

A contract may include:
- hours care is provided
- rate and payment procedures
- holiday, vacation and illness days for the provider and children
- snacks and meals served.

Not all child care providers use written contracts, however, it is strongly encouraged that parents put their verbal agreements between themselves and their child care provider into writing.

To receive sample parent-provider contracts call the Children’s Home + Aid CCR+R Program at 1-800-467-9200, ext. 124
Safe & Home Alone

Unfortunately, no magic age exists when children develop the maturity and good sense they need to stay home alone. However, you can look for signs that show your child may be ready. Your decision should be made together when both of you feel ready for self-care to begin. Every family’s situation is different, and your plan will depend on where you live and nearby resources.

First, your child should show a desire and willingness to stay home alone. Children who are easily frightened or who express an unwillingness to stay home alone are probably not ready for this responsibility.

In addition, your child should be able to consider alternatives and make decisions independently. Children who are able to get ready for school on time, solve problems on their own, complete homework and household chores with minimum supervision and remember to tell you where they are going and when they will be back are demonstrating some of the skills they will need to care for themselves.

For many children, these abilities begin to appear between the ages of 10 and 12. Others may need a few more years to develop the skills and sense of responsibility they will need to stay alone.

Finally, you should consider several other factors including the safety of your neighborhood, the availability of adults nearby, and how long your child will be alone. If your neighborhood is unsafe, if there are no adults nearby to call in case of an emergency or if your child must remain alone for a long time, you should continue to use some form of child care even if your child seems ready to stay alone.

Can Your Child:

- Lock and unlock doors and windows.
- Tell time.
- Give their name, address telephone number and directions to their farm, home or apartment.
- Identify two escape routes from their home in case of an emergency. Identify a safe place to seek shelter during a storm.
- Show their parents how to correctly handle telephone calls.
- Show their parents how to handle strangers at the door.
- Find the first-aid supplies.
- Explain how they would handle first aid for cuts and scrapes, burns, nosebleeds, poisoning, and choking.
- Explain how to reach their parents by telephone or cell phone.
- Name two adults to contact in an emergency.
- Name five household rules and say which ones were followed last week.
- Show their parents what to do when they get home in the afternoon.
- Fix three snack foods by themselves.

Source: At Home Alone by Karen Debound
Clinics and Health Departments

The following Clinics and Health Departments may provide immunizations, physicals, and Tuberculin Skin Tests (T.B.) at a reduced rate or on a sliding fee scale based upon a family’s income.

Alton Medical Center, Ltd.
Alton, IL
(618) 466-6177

Belleville Family Practice Center
Belleville, IL
(618) 233-5480

Bond County Health Department
Greenville, IL
(618) 664-1442

Bunker Hill Rural Health Center
Bunker Hill, IL
(618) 585-3055

Cahokia Health Center
Cahokia, IL
(618) 337-2597

Clinton County Health Dept.
Carlyle, IL
(618) 594-2723

East Side Health District
East St. Louis, IL
(618) 874-4713

Madison County Health Department
Wood River, IL
(618) 692-8954

Southern Illinois Regional Wellness Center
East St. Louis, IL
618) 874-3120

East St. Louis, IL
271-9191

Washington Park, IL
876-3701

Alton, IL
463-0649

Bethalto, IL
259-0354

Granite City, IL
452-3301

Brooklyn, IL
482-8008

Monroe-Randolph Bi-County Health Department
Chester, IL (618) 826-5007
Waterloo, IL (618) 939-3871
Sparta (618) 443-2995

www.eqyptian.net/~mrch

St. Clair County Health Department
Belleville, IL
(618) 233-7703

www.health.co.st-clair.il.us

Southern Illinois Health Care Foundation
Centreville, IL
(618) 332-2740

www.sihf.org
Immunization Schedule

Below is an immunization schedule with routine vaccines and when they are generally given. These are only general guidelines based on recommendations by the Center for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Please see your doctor or health clinic for full recommendations.

2015 Recommended Immunizations for Children from Birth Through 6 Years Old

Is your family growing? To protect your new baby and yourself against whooping cough, get a Tdap vaccine in the third trimester of each pregnancy. Talk to your doctor for more details.

NOTE: Is your family growing? To protect your new baby and yourself against whooping cough, get a Tdap vaccine in the third trimester of each pregnancy. Talk to your doctor for more details.

Shaded boxes indicate the vaccine can be given during shown age range.

FOOTNOTES:

- * Two doses given at least four weeks apart are recommended for children aged 6 months through 8 years of age who are getting a flu vaccine for the first time and for some other children in this age group.
- § Two doses of HepA vaccine are needed for lasting protection. The first dose of HepA vaccine should be given between 12 months and 23 months of age. The second dose should be given 6 to 18 months later. HepA vaccination may be given to any child 12 months and older to protect against HepA.
Women, Infants & Children (WIC)

Women Infants & Children (WIC) is a nutrition-based program for woman, infants, and children up to five years of age who meet eligibility requirements. The program provides supplemental foods, healthcare referrals, nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion and support.

**What food benefits do WIC participants receive?** The foods provided through the WIC Program are designed to supplement participants’ diets with specific nutrients. WIC authorized foods include infant cereal, baby foods, iron-fortified adult cereal, fruits and vegetables, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, soy-based beverages, tofu, peanut butter, dried and canned beans/peas, canned fish, whole wheat bread and other whole-grain options. For infants of women who do not fully breastfeed, WIC provides iron-fortified infant formula.

**Program benefits include more than food.** WIC benefits are not limited only to food. Participants have access to a number of resources, including health screening, nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, immunization screening and referral, substance abuse referral, and more.


The best way to locate the nearest WIC location is to call your local health department.

**Bond County Health Department**
618-664-1442

**Clinton County Health Department**
618-594-2723

**Madison County**
Granite City .. 618-877-3433
or toll-free: 877-842-5028
Alton ............... 618-462-8155
or toll-free: 877-842-9292

**Monroe-Randolph Bi-County**
Health Department
Chester .......618-826-5007
Waterloo ......618-939-3871
Sparta ..........618-443-2995

**St. Clair County Health**
Department
618-233-7703

**Washington County Health Department**
618-327-3644
**Lead Screening and Health Risks**

Lead poisoning is the number one environmental danger facing children today... and it’s entirely preventable. When lead is absorbed into the body, it is highly toxic to many organs and systems. U.S. lead can be found in paint, dust, soil, water, air, and food. More commonly in the U.S., children are poisoned through chronic, low-level exposure. For children at risk for lead exposure, a simple blood test can prevent a lifetime spoiled by the irreversible damage caused by lead poisoning.

Symptoms of chronic exposure to lead include:

- Irritability and headaches.
- Loss of energy and appetite.
- Abdominal pain, vomiting, and anemia.
- Noticeable learning difficulty.
- Poor attention span, hyperactivity

To reduce risks, keep your home clean and eat a well-balanced diet. In addition, a home risk assessment will tell you where the lead hazards are and what to do about them. Local health departments provide information and/or services in this regard.

**Poison Control**

The Illinois Poison Center (IPC) provides free, confidential poison prevention and treatment advice to Illinois residents and health care professionals. Pharmacists, physicians, nurses, and poison information specialists staff the IPC. Anyone with questions or who may suspect a possible poisoning should call the hotline: **1-800-222-1222**

Remember, do not automatically treat for a suspected poisoning without calling the poison control hotline first. Hotline experts will be able to give you advice on the most appropriate treatment.

For additional information on general poison safety, please contact: Illinois Poison Center at: 1-800-222-1222 or log onto their website: www.mchc.org/ipc/

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**Facts on Lead Poisoning**

- Over 80% of homes built before 1978 in the U.S. have lead based paint in them. The older the home, the more likely it is to contain lead-based paint.

- Lead is most harmful to children under 6 because lead is easily absorbed into their growing bodies.

- Children 12 months - 36 months have a lot of hand to mouth activity, which makes them more likely to ingest lead based paint.

- Pregnant Women are also at increased risk because lead ingested by the mother can cross the placenta and affect the unborn child.

- According to Center for Disease Control estimates, 890,000 U.S. children ages 1-5 have elevated blood lead levels.
Car Seat Safety

Car Seat Recommendations for Children
There are many car seat choices on the market. Use the information below to help you choose the type of car seat that best meets your child’s needs.

Select a car seat based on your child’s age and size, choose a seat that fits in your vehicle, and use it every time.

- Always refer to your specific car seat manufacturer’s instructions (check height and weight limits) and read the vehicle owner’s manual on how to install the car seat using the seat belt or lower anchors and a tether, if available.

- To maximize safety, keep your child in the car seat for as long as possible, as long as the child fits within the manufacturer’s height and weight requirements.

- Keep your child in the back seat at least through age 12.

Source: www.safercar.gov
Back To Sleep

The Back to Sleep campaign is suitably named for its recommendation to place healthy babies on their backs to sleep. Placing babies on their backs to sleep reduces the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), also known as “crib death”.

What can you do to help lower the risk of SIDS?

• Place your baby on his or her back to sleep, at night time and naptime. This is the best way to reduce the risk of SIDS.
• Place your baby on a firm mattress, such as in a safety approved crib. Don’t put babies to sleep on soft mattresses, sofas, sofa cushions, waterbeds, sheepskins, bean bag chairs or other soft surfaces.
• Remove all fluffy and loose bedding from the sleep area. Make sure you take all pillows, quilts, stuffed toys, and other soft items out of the crib.
• Make sure your baby’s face and head stay uncovered during sleep. Keep your baby’s mouth and nose clear of blankets and other coverings during sleep. Use sleep clothing with no other covering over the baby. If you do use a blanket or another covering, make sure your baby is “feet-to-foot” in the crib. Feet-to-foot means that the baby’s feet are at the bottom of the crib, the blanket is no higher than the baby’s chest, and the blanket is tucked in around the crib mattress.
• Don’t smoke before or after the birth of your baby. Create a smoke-free zone around your baby. Make sure no one smokes around your baby.
• Don’t let your baby overheat during sleep. Keep your baby warm during sleep, but not too warm. Your baby’s room should be at a temperature that is comfortable for an adult. Too many layers of clothing or blankets can overheat your baby.

For more information on sleep position or SIDS please contact: SIDS Resources, Inc. 1-800-421-3511 www.sidsresources.org or consult your pediatrician.

Make Sure No One Shakes Your Baby

Did you Know…?

• Shaken Baby Syndrome is a form of head trauma caused by violent shaking.
• As early as 1972, a noted physician called for a nationwide campaign to alert parents to the dangers of shaking babies.
• 25-50% of the American public does NOT know that shaking an infant can cause brain damage or death.
• Two-thirds of shaken infants result in death or mental and physical disabilities.

• Research indicates that crying is frequently the behavior that precipitates shaking a baby and caregivers and/or parents often react out of stress to a crying baby.

Professionals and the general public alike should be aware of the dangers of shaking babies.

For more information or a presentation on Shaken Baby Syndrome please go to: www.dontshake.org
Sex Offender Registration

Any person convicted of a felony sex crime or an attempt to commit a felony sex crime is required to register as a sex offender regardless of the victim’s age. In Illinois, sheriff’s offices are required to notify schools and child care facilities of sex offenders residing within their respective counties. To view a listing of registered sex offenders or to find information on registered sex offenders, you can log onto the Illinois State Police website at www.isp.state.il.us/sor. Click the Registered Sex offenders Info and click the online “List of Registered Sex Offenders.” There you can search by city, county, zip code, name, etc., for registered sex offenders in Illinois. If you would like additional information on this law refer to: A Guide to Sex Offender Registration in Illinois at the same web site listed above.

Your Child’s Safety Comes First

- Never leave a child alone in a car or unattended. Remember, someone with experience can break into your car in less than thirty seconds.
- Listen when your child tells you he or she does not want to be with someone. Direct questioning may reveal something you should know about them.
- Be involved in your child’s activities. Know your child’s friends.
- Pay attention when someone shows greater than normal interest in your child. Find out why. Be doubly cautious in this situation. Don’t allow opportunities for that adult to have your child alone.
- Be sensitive to changes in your child’s behavior or attitudes. Be especially alert for any betraying premature sexual understanding.
- Never belittle any fear or concern on the part of your children.
- Be prepared to describe your children accurately, including clothing, visible identifying marks, or social characteristics. Think of those items now and write them down. It may be more difficult to concentrate in a time of extreme stress.
- Develop a set procedure should you and your child become separated while away from home. (Example: both may call a trusted friend and leave an address and telephone number to call back. Then wait at the phone until reunited.)
- Do not buy items, which visibly display your child’s name. It could give an abductor the advantage of seeming to know your child. (“Hey Billy, your Mom’s been in an accident. We need to rush to the hospital. Jump in the car!”)
- Take a photograph of your child each year (4 times each year if under age 2). Have several copies on hand in case your child becomes missing.
- Be sure your child’s school or child care provider will not release him/her to anyone other than you or someone you officially designate.
- Instruct the school to contact you immediately if your child is absent, or if someone other than you arrives to pick him/her up without advance notice from you.

Reprinted from: Your Child's Safety
Affordable Child Care Should Not be Out of Reach

The State of Illinois provides low-income families assistance for child care services if needed to work, attend school, training or other work-related activities.

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) operates this program, however Children’s Home + Aid Child Care Resource + Referral (CCR+R) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) is responsible for the administration of the program.

The IDHS Child Care Assistance Program serves low-income working families and families on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participating in education, training or other work-related activities approved by their caseworker. CCAP also assists teen parents in high school or GED programs and clients who are not receiving TANF cash assistance. Clients in a college degree program may have a minimum work requirement.

For more information, please contact:
Children’s Home + Aid CCR+R Child Care Assistance Program at 1-800-847-6770, ext. 360.
www.ChildrensHomeAndAid.org/CCRRSouthern

MONEY MATTERS
Using Tax Credits to Help Pay for Child and Dependent Care

Did you know that you might be eligible for tax breaks to help pay for your child and dependent care expenses and reduce the taxes you pay or potentially increase your tax refund?

The four tax credits you should be familiar with include: Earned Income Tax Credit, Dependent Care Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, and Dependent Care Assistance Plans.

Earned Income Tax Credit (Schedule EIC)

You may be eligible for the Earned Income Credit (Schedule EIC) of up to $2900 if you have family earnings under $33,241 and have one or more qualifying children.

A qualifying child is a child who:
• is your son, daughter, adopted child, grandchild, stepchild, or foster child; and
• under age 19, or under age 24 and a full-time student at the end of the year, or any age and permanently disabled; and
• lived with you for more than six months during the year. (A foster child, must have lived with you for the whole year.)

Even if you don’t owe taxes, you may be eligible for a refund check simply by claiming the credit.

Dependent Care Tax Credit

You may be eligible for Dependent Care Tax Credit (Form 2441) if you:
• have child care expenses for one or more children under age 13 who live with you; and
• pay for the care to enable you to work or look for work in paid employment (if you are married, both you and your spouse must be working or looking for work, or one spouse may be a fulltime student, or unable to care for him or herself).

Families of all income levels are eligible. The higher your child care expenses and the lower the amount of your income, the larger your credit.

Child Tax Credit

You may be eligible for the Child Tax Credit (Form 8812) if you:
• have one or two children under age 17, you may be eligible for a Child Tax Credit.

Note: This information is provided as a brief overview. Please check with a financial advisor on your particular situation.
if you have three or more children under age 17, you may be eligible for the Additional Child Tax Credit. Dependent Care Assistance Program

Dependent Care Assistance Program (DCAP) was established to help you pay for dependent care expenses on a tax-free basis. The DCAP is only available through your employer and as a benefit. Tax savings with a DCAP can be significant. You do not pay federal, state, or local income taxes, nor do you pay Social Security (FICA) taxes on your deposits to your account or on the reimbursements paid to you. A DCAP is a good way to pay for expenses incurred for the care of your dependent child(ren), an incapacitated spouse, dependent parent, or a mentally or physically impaired dependent while you and/or your spouse work.

You may deposit into your DCAP as little as $100 to a maximum of $5,000 per year ($2,500 if filing a “married filing separate” income tax return). As you make this estimate, remember to exclude time for vacations, holidays and possible illness when you may not be required to pay dependent care expenses. Also consider, if appropriate, that you may participate in more than one type of dependent care program throughout the year—each with different costs. One example could be a before and after school program during the school year and full-time child care during vacation periods.

Your DCAP deposits are deducted from your paycheck each pay period. You will then be reimbursed in nontaxable dollars from your account for approved expenses. Unlike a bank account, your deposits and reimbursements are not subject to taxation.

If you use a DCAP, you may not claim the same expenses under the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit. Most people receive a greater tax savings with the DCAP. The tax credit applies only to federal taxes while the DCAP saves you federal, state and local income taxes, and Social Security (FICA) taxes. For more information about DCAP, inquire with your Human Resource Manager.

Family earnings and tax credits will vary from year to year. To learn more about these tax credits ask your accountant, the IRS at 1-800-829-1040, or log on to the American Business Collaborative website at: www.irs.gov
Access to Health Care

It is important that your family has access to health care. Programs like these make that possible.

**All Kids**

All Kids is Illinois’ new program that gives every child access to affordable health insurance. KidCare and Medicaid are now part of All Kids. All Kids covers regular checkups, immunization shots, doctor visits, hospital stays, prescription drugs, vision care, dental care, and eye-glasses. All Kids also covers special services like medical equipment, speech therapy, physical therapy, mental health services and much more for children who need them.

Children age 18 or younger who live with their families in Illinois and who need health insurance can get All Kids. There are no limits to the income a family can have. All Kids will cost most families a lot less than private insurance. Monthly premiums and copays are based on the family’s annual income.

**FamilyCare**

FamilyCare covers parents living with their children age 18 or younger. FamilyCare also covers grandparents or other relatives who are raising children in place of their parents.

Like All Kids, FamilyCare covers doctor visits, dental care, specialty medical services, hospital care, emergency services, prescription drugs and more.

To qualify for FamilyCare you must live in Illinois, be a U.S. citizen, and meet the income guidelines. Some families who pay for private health insurance may qualify for help to pay their premiums.

**Moms and Babies**

Moms and Babies covers pregnant women and their babies.

For more information, or to request applications for All Kids, FamilyCare and Moms and Babies, call toll free: 1-866-ALL-KIDS (1-866-255-5437) or visit: [www.allkidscovered.com](http://www.allkidscovered.com).

If you use a TTY, call: 1-877-204-1012.
Put Children First

During recent years, new state and federal initiatives have provided many additional avenues for collection of overdue child support. These initiatives have aided in the collection of long-overdue child support for many families. Non-payment of child support is a primary reason almost half a million children in Illinois receive public assistance.

The Illinois Department of Public Aid (DPA) is fully committed to the use of all available enforcement tools to collect unpaid child support. The DPA’s Child Support Enforcement Program serves Illinois residents regardless of income.

Services include:

- parent locating services,
- genetic testing to establish paternity,
- child support order establishment and order modification reviews,
- medical support,
- wage withholding,
- computerized accounting and billing, and
- interception of federal and state income tax refunds.

A small application fee may be charged to some families with the means to pay.


For more information, answers to your child support questions, or for an application for child support enforcement services, call: 1-800-447-4278.

If you are using a teletypewriter (TTY), call toll free at: 1-800-526-5812.

To learn more about your rights as a parent, call the Parent’s Rights & Responsibilities toll free hotline at: 1-888-855-2858 or log on to: www.ilchildsupport.com

www.MONEYMATTERS.com
Developmentally Appropriate Practice: What Does It Mean?

All child care providers should demonstrate developmentally appropriate practice when caring for and educating children. What does Developmentally Appropriate Practice look like?

1. Care givers understand and are knowledgeable about children’s growth and development, and plan appropriate play activities and interactions accordingly.

Children thrive from activities that are challenging enough to help them grow, yet not so challenging that it causes frustration and failure. Caregivers must understand at which level each child is, and what activities and interactions will best help them learn.

2. Caregivers treat each child as an individual.

Since no two children are exactly alike, each child is respected as a unique person with individual patterns and rates of growth. Caregivers must carefully observe each child to learn about their strengths, interests, and needs within the group. Through these observations, activities and experiences are provided that match the child’s developing and emerging abilities.


Children grow and develop when they feel safe and secure within their environments. It is important that early care & education professionals working with children have some knowledge of the social and cultural backgrounds in which the children live in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for participating children and their families.

When selecting a child care program for your child, ask yourself the following questions to determine if the program is developmentally appropriate:

Is this practice or policy in keeping with what you have read about how children grow and learn?

Does this practice or policy take into account my child’s individual needs or abilities?

Does this practice or policy demonstrate respect for my child, our family and our family’s home culture?

Although many early care & education programs may interpret these principles in slightly different ways, they provide a common foundation for defining high quality early childhood programs. Such programs are ones in which children of all abilities, ages, races, cultures, socio-economic and family, lifestyle backgrounds feel loved, valued and appreciated.

For more information on Developmentally Appropriate Practice log onto the National Association for the Education of Young Children website: [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)
Should I be Concerned?

Children develop at different rates, but most follow a general timeline (preemies may be off schedule by a few weeks or months). If your child doesn’t seem to be meeting developmental milestones within several weeks of the average, ask your pediatrician about it. It may be nothing, but if your child does have a delay, you’ll want to catch it early so a professional can assess your child and you can obtain the necessary services if needed.

Regardless, make sure your child is evaluated regularly. Often vision and hearing problems are hard to spot unless you are a professional, so eye and ear checkups should be done annually at a minimum. Most parents are familiar with physical development, however you will also want to observe how your child’s language and communication skills are developing, how your child adapts emotionally and how your child responds in social situations.

As a general rule, trust your instincts. If something seems odd or wrong to you about the way your baby is developing, ask about it. After all, you know your child best.

If you are looking for more information on learning differences, developmental delays, or a chance to meet other parents who share your concerns, visit the website, www.babycenter.com or call STARNET (Support and Technical Assistance Regional Network) at 618-825-3966.
Screen to Succeed

A developmental screening is a quick look to see how children are doing in important areas of their development, such as: language-communication, physical abilities, social skills, and problem-solving skills. Parents are key partners in these screenings.

**Developmental Screening:**
- Provides a quick and easy way to notice your child’s growth & development.
- Celebrates what your child can already do such as cooing, walking, drawing, sharing, problem solving and more.
- Identifies your child’s strengths and any potential developmental concerns.
- Offers information about family support services & programs.
- Helps to support your child’s development & kindergarten readiness.

There are many places you can take your child to receive a screening: Doctor, Health Department, WIC, Head Start, School District, or early childhood program. Participating in a developmental screening will give you time to talk about your child’s development. You may also receive information about fun and simple activity ideas you can use with your child to help them continue to learn & grow.

Parents know their children best and are the experts on their own children. If you have children between 1 month and 5 ½ years of age, complete a FREE developmental screening Ages & Stages Questionnaire-3 in less than 15 minutes. To access the screening use this web link, [https://asqonline.com/family/1b2940](https://asqonline.com/family/1b2940).

Developmental screening results may predict three different paths.

- **No Concern:** Continue to help your child play and grow. Re-screen in 6 months.
- **Watch and Rescreen:** Add experiences and rescreen in 3 months.
- **Refer and Follow Up:** With Early Intervention or the School District

If screening results indicate that your child needs an evaluation, you will be connected to Early Intervention (birth to three year olds) or your local School District (3-5 year olds) to help ensure your child has the best possible start. If during a screening you have any questions, or desire another opinion don’t ever hesitate to ask your child’s doctor or early childhood provider.

Greater East St. Louis Innovation Zone - funded in part by the federal Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant.
The Early Intervention program in Illinois is a collection of services for children age birth to three who have delays in development or who are at risk of developmental delays and their families. EI provides families with strategies to help children learn essential skills, improves developmental and educational growth, and supports children with developmental delays in becoming more independent. The Early Intervention program in Illinois is called Child and Family Connections.

Early intervention services include, but are not limited to:

- developmental evaluations and assessments
- physical therapy
- occupational therapy
- speech-language therapy
- nutrition services
- psychological services and social work services

Children eligible for early intervention services must be experiencing developmental delays in one or more of the following areas: cognitive development; physical development, including vision and hearing; language and speech development; psycho-social development; and self-help skills. Children may also be eligible due to diagnosed physical or mental conditions, such as cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, or certain family circumstances that put them at risk of having substantial delays.

Child & Family Connections is part of a statewide system responsible for ensuring that all referrals of children under the age of three to the Early Intervention Services System receive a timely response.

For more information, visit: www.eiclearinghouse.org or call your local Child & Family Connections office:

ARC Community Support Systems
Child and Family Connections
1901 South 4th Street, Suite 209
Effingham, IL 62401
Phone: (217) 347-5119
Toll Free: (888) 459-5437
Bond, Effingham, Layette, Christian, Macoupin, Montgomery, Lawrence, Crawford, Clay, Jasper, Richland Counties

Regional Office of Education (ROE) #13
Child & Family Connections
2 Eagle Center, Suite 1
O’Fallon, IL 62269
Phone: 618-622-6581
Madison, Monroe, Randolph, St. Clair Counties

Regional Office of Education #13
Child & Family Connections
101 South Lincoln
Centralia, IL 62801
618-532-4919
888-661-0900
Clinton, Washington, Marion, Franklin, Jefferson, Williamson Counties
10 Things Every Parent Should Know About Play

1. Children learn through their play.

Children learn and develop:

- **cognitive skills** – like math and problem solving in a pretend grocery store

- **physical abilities** – like balancing blocks and running on the playground

- **new vocabulary** – like the words they need to play with toy dinosaurs

- **social skills** – like playing together in a pretend car wash

- **literacy skills** – like creating a menu for a pretend restaurant

2. Play is healthy.

Play helps children grow strong and healthy. It also counteracts obesity issues facing many children today.


Play helps your children grow emotionally. It is joyful and provides an outlet for anxiety and stress.

4. Play is more than meets the eye.

Play is simple and complex. There are many types of play: symbolic play, sociodramatic, functional, and games with rules— to name just a few. Researchers study play’s many aspects: how children learn through play, how outdoor play impacts children’s health, the effects of screen time on play, to the need for recess in the school day.

5. Make time for play.

As parents, you are the biggest supporters of your children’s learning. You can make sure they have as much time to play as possible during the day to promote cognitive, language, physical, social, and emotional development.
6. **Play and learning go hand-in-hand.**
They are not separate activities. They are intertwined. Think about them as a science lecture with a lab. Play is the child’s lab.

7. **Play outside.**
Remember your own outdoor experiences of building forts, playing on the beach, sledding in the winter, or playing with other children in the neighborhood. Make sure your children create outdoor memories too.

8. **There’s a lot to learn about play.**
There’s a lot written on children and play. Many studies have been done on the value of play. Visit www.naeyc.org for more information.

9. **Trust your own playful instincts.**
Remember as a child how play just came naturally? Give your children time for play and see all that they are capable of when given the opportunity.

10. **Play is a child’s context for learning.**
Children practice and reinforce their learning in multiple areas during play. It gives them a place and a time for learning that cannot be achieved through completing a worksheet. For example, in playing restaurant, children write and draw menus, set prices, take orders, and make out checks. Play provides rich learning opportunities and leads to children’s success and self-esteem.
Family Fun Activities

Infants and Toddlers:

Pipe Cleaner Fun
Give your child a collander or strainer, and supply them with at least a few pipe cleaners. Help them learning to poke the pipe cleaners through the holes, and pull them out the other side. This is a great way to work on fine motor skills and hand/eye coordination!

Shaker Bottles
Fill an empty plastic bottle with water. To add color, add a drop of food coloring to it. Drop in various interesting items such as glitter, confetti, paper clips, pom pom balls, etc. Then hot glue the lid on and use duct tape on the lid for extra security. Allow your child to shake and explore the shaker bottle. Help them to shake it, roll it, and talk about what’s inside! To turn these into musical instruments, make some without water and add some rice, jingle bells, or beans.

Muffin Tin Sorting
Give your child a muffin tin and a paper towel roll that has been cut into 2 inch “slices”. Show your child how each piece fits into each muffin hole and encourage your child to fill each muffin hole with a circle piece.

Sensory Bag Exploring
Fill a freezer Ziploc bag with 2-3 colors of paint. Suggested colors are Blue, Red and Yellow. Squirt each color into the bag, but be careful not to mix the colors quite yet! Seal the bag at the top, then tape each side of the bag down to the floor or table top, so that it cannot be pulled up. Show your child how moving their finger across the bag can mix the colors and move the paint. Encourage them to squish the paint

Preschoolers

Magic Goop
1 cup cornstarch
1/2 cup water

Add enough water so that the consistency is similar to glue. Temper paint may be added for color. This “goop” is not quite a liquid, but not quite a solid. Allow your child to explore the goop, moving it from one hand to another, and raking his/her fingers through it.

Float or Sink?
Give your child a small tub of water, along with a basket of various items that you have collected. Examples are: erasers, paper clips, cotton balls, legos, crayons, a leaf, a small stick, a small car, etc. Help your child guess which items would float in the water, and which items would sink. They can then test their guesses to see if they were correct.

Small to Big
Take your child outside and tell them to gather as many sticks as they can. Once they have a pile of sticks, ask them to sort the sticks by size by lining them up, shortest to longest. They may need your help to get started. Talk about each stick’s length and how it compares to the other sticks. This activity builds math skills such as comparing and measuring.

RESOURCES
School-Agers

**Marshmallow Building**
For a challenging but fun way to build, give your child mini marshmallows, dry spaghetti noodles, and toothpicks. Challenge them to build towers and buildings using those three things. They must stick the noodles or toothpicks into the marshmallows to start building. Give them time to figure it out on their own, but be there if they need help in figuring it out.

**Basket Weaving**
Give the children a plastic berry basket and thin construction paper strips in several colors. Be sure to cut the strips so that they fit through the spaces in the basket. Help the children weave the paper strips through the space to make a colorful woven basket.

**Silly Putty**
2 parts white glue (Elmer’s)  
1 part Sta-Flo liquid starch  
Mix well. Store in airtight container. If it needs to dry a bit before it is “workable,” it may be necessary to add a touch more glue or starch. **NOTE:** If you use Elmer’s School Glue instead of regular white it doesn’t bounce or pick up pictures, but it makes a gooey delight your kids will love. Use on a smooth surface.

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Read to Your Child...  
No Matter Their Age!

**Read together every day.**
Read to your child every day. Make this a warm and loving time when the two of you can cuddle close.

**Give everything a name.**
Build your child’s vocabulary by talking about interesting words and objects. For example, “Look at that airplane! Those are the wings of the plane. Why do you think they are called wings?”

**Read with fun in your voice.**
Read to your child with humor and expression. Use different voices. Ham it up!

**Know when to stop.**
Put the book away for awhile if your child loses interest or is having trouble paying attention.

**Be interactive**
Discuss what’s happening in the book, point out things on the page, and ask questions.

**Read it again and again.**
Go ahead and read your child’s favorite book for the 100th time!

Source: www.pbskids.org
Children's Home + Aid Highlights

For the Love of Children

Children's Home + Aid was founded in 1883 by Reverend Martin Van Arsdale. The Reverend devoted his life to finding homes for homeless and abandoned orphans. Today, Children’s Home + Aid continues his work and reaches out to more than 93,000 children and families each year through services in adoption, child and family counseling, early childhood education, foster care, intact family services, parent support, residential treatment, youth services, in addition to community outreach and volunteer and education programs throughout Illinois.

Dedicated volunteers and staff, provide comprehensive quality programs in 38 Illinois counties helping children and families overcome the obstacles of poverty, abuse, and neglect to achieve healthy family structures and self-sufficiency. Children’s Home + Aid is a compassionate advocate for the welfare of children and families, and is recognized as a leader in initiating and providing quality services.

A private, nonprofit, and nonsectarian social service agency, Children's Home + Aid is committed to a community-based, family focused, and child centered continuum of services.

With an annual budget of over $38 million, 90 percent of that amount is spent on services to children and families, and only 10 percent on management and general expenses. More than 650 staff members are employed by Children’s Home + Aid statewide.

Children’s Home + Aid is accredited by the Council of Accreditation Services for Families and Children and licensed by the Department of Children & Family Services.

For more information on Children’s Home + Aid Southern Region program services, call the Granite City Regional Office at: 618-452-8900.
CCR+R Services

The Children’s Home + Aid Child Care Resource + Referral Program staff are available to provide assistance and support to families, child care providers, employers, and communities.

For more information: 1-800-467-9200, ext. 104.

**Parent Referral and Data Specialist:**
- Referrals to child care programs near home, school, or work
- Assistance in determining specific child care needs
- Additional resources designed to assist parents in selecting a provider
- Provide tips on how to choose quality child care

**Training and Technical Assistance Advisors:**
- Technical assistance for child care providers on upcoming workshops and in-service training requirements
- Visits to child care programs to interact and model developmentally appropriate techniques
- Consultations and resources for individuals interested in opening a child care center

**Literacy and Recruitment Specialist:**
- On-site literacy activities for children in early childhood programs
- Information and resources about children’s literacy
- Start up information and technical assistance for family child care providers
- Resources and support for license-exempt provider

**Quality Specialist:**
- Provide technical assistance, consultation, and education regarding the IDHS Quality Rating System

**Infant/Toddler Specialist**
- Assist child care providers with teacher-child interactions and designing environments for infant/toddler care
- Assist with planning appropriate activities for infants and toddlers
- Professional development for infant/toddler child care providers

**Professional Development Advisor:**
- Information about professional development opportunities and funding, including: credentials, accreditation, conferences and ExeleRate

**Mental Health Consultant**
- Provide early childhood mental health consultation to child care providers with on-site or phone consultation, support and training, connections to screening resources and evaluations for children
Mental Health Consultant Program

Caregiver Connections is a partnership between Chestnut Health Systems and Children’s Home + Aid CCR+R to provide early childhood mental health consultation to childcare providers. They provide on-site or by phone consultation, support and training, connections to screening resources and evaluations for children, and referrals to child and family services.

Do you have questions or concerns about challenging childhood behaviors such as:

- Hitting and biting
- Difficulty listening or following directions
- Excessive crying or tantrums
- Eating or Sleeping Problems
- Possible Delays in Development
- Shyness or Inability to play with others
- Or family problems with the children in your care including:
  - Substance Abuse
  - Depression
  - Divorce
  - Stress

Caregiver Connections and the Mental Health Consultant Program understands the stress and worry you face when confronted with these issues and can work directly with you and your child care provider to help deal with children’s issues.

For further information, please contact the Mental Health Consultant at Children's Home + Aid, call 618-397-0900.
Information at Your Fingertips

Helpful Websites:
American Academy of Pediatrics
www.aap.org
Children's Home + Aid Child Care Resource + Referral Program
www.ChildrensHomeAndAid.org/CCRRSouthern
Child Care Aware
www.childcareaware.org
Consumer Product Safety Commission
www.cpsc.gov
ExceleRate Illinois
www.excelerateillinois.com/
Illinois Early Learning Project
www.illinoisearlylearning.org
National Association for the Education of Young Children
www.naeyc.org
National Child Care Information Center
www.nccic.org
Ounce of Prevention Fund
www.ounceofprevention.org
Touch Points
www.touchpoints.org
Voices for Children
www.voices4kids.org
Zero to Three
www.zerotothree.org

Free Apps for Your Phone:

Let’s Play!: Let’s Play! is a free parenting app from ZERO TO THREE with fun activities, organized by age and routine, for parents to use to support their young child’s early learning
www.zerotothree.org/policy/beyond-the-word-gap/interactive.html

Daily Vroom: This app makes it easy to access fun activities any time, to make the most of precious years when the foundation for all learning is happening. Daily Vroom enhances the things you already do and helps spark new ideas!
http://www.joinvroom.org/parents

Babies on the Homefront: Designed specifically for military and veteran parents of young children. This app offers an array of written and video information for families, including behavior tips, parent-child activities, and parental self-care strategies.
www.zerotothree.org/policy/beyond-the-word-gap/interactive.html
Register and Vote

Children’s Home + Aid Child Care Resource + Referral Program encourages all families to participate in the electoral process by registering to vote and voting. You must register to vote no later than 29 days before the election in which you wish to vote. You may register to vote in person at the Office of the County Clerk in the county and precinct where you maintain your permanent residency.

Alternatively, you may register to vote by completing and mailing an Illinois Voter Registration Application to the Office of the County Clerk in your county and precinct of permanent residency. Illinois Voter Registration Applications are available through the Illinois State Board of Elections at (217) 782-5959 or www.elections.state.il.us.

| The following is a listing of local County Clerk Offices:                      |
| Bond County                     | (618) 664-0449 |
| Clinton County                  | (618) 594-2464 |
| Madison County                  | (618) 692-6290 |
| Monroe County                   | (618) 939-8681 |
| Randolph County                 | (618) 826-5000 |
| St. Clair County                | (618) 825-2380 |
| Washington County               | (618) 327-4800 |

If you think your vote doesn’t count, think again. Every vote counts, and your vote is very important. Register now so you can participate in all local and state elections.

Whom to Call

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<tr>
<th>Children’s Home + Aid Child Care Resource + Referral Program</th>
<th>1-800-467-9200</th>
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<tr>
<td>To learn more about early care and education options in your community and for referrals</td>
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<tr>
<th>Children’s Home + Aid Child Care Assistance Program</th>
<th>1-800-847-6770</th>
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<tr>
<td>To inquire about eligibility or an application for the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP).</td>
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<th>DCFS Family Development Unit</th>
<th>618-257-7500</th>
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<td>For questions, concerns, or complaints about a licensed child care program’s compliance with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) licensing standards,</td>
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<th>Day Care Information</th>
<th>1-877-746-0829</th>
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<tr>
<td>To inquire about a child care program’s licensing status or substantiated complaints.</td>
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<th>All Kids</th>
<th>1-866-255-5437</th>
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<td>To inquire about qualifying for health insurance for Illinois children.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Illinois 24-hour Child Abuse Hotline</th>
<th>1-800-252-2873</th>
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<td>To report, if you suspect or know of an incident of child abuse or neglect.</td>
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<th>Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Clinic</th>
<th>1-800-829-1040</th>
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<tr>
<td>To inquire about eligibility for child care tax credits</td>
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<th>Southern Illinois Health Foundation</th>
<th>618-332-0694</th>
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<td>To inquire about healthcare or other medical support services.</td>
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2-1-1

Every day, thousands of people turn to 211, a United Way service, to find information and support.

2-1-1 is a free, confidential referral and information helpline and website that connects people from all communities and of all ages to the essential health and human services they need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2-1-1 can be accessed by phone or computer. A toll-free call to 2-1-1 connects you to a community resource specialist in your area who can put you in touch with local organizations that provide critical services that can improve—and save—lives.

Whether in times of natural disaster or personal crisis, 2-1-1 is committed to being the first, most essential resource to anyone who needs help.

Call 2-1-1 and speak with a live, highly trained service professional in your area from any cell phone or landline. All calls are private and confidential.

For more information, simply dial 2-1-1, or visit http://www.unitedway.org/our-impact/featured-programs/2-1-1

You’ll find information about:

- Food pantries
- Shelter and housing options and utilities assistance
- General Education Development (GED) preparation
- Heating and cooling shelters and natural disaster relief
- Employment and education opportunities
- Services for veterans
- Health care, prenatal care, vaccination and health epidemic information
- Addiction prevention and rehabilitation programs
- Reentry help for ex-offenders
- Support groups for individuals with mental illnesses or special needs
- A safe, confidential path out of physical and/or emotional domestic abuse

RESOURCES