

Action for Children (AFC) is Franklin County's resource and referral agency for all things related to early learning and child care. AFC provides parents with the resources to make informed decisions about quality experiences for their children. Whether looking for early learning and child care programs, parenting tips or resources for a child's specific needs, Action for Children can help.

For more information contact Action for Children at 614.224.0222 or online at <http://www.actionforchildren.org>.

Quality Matters

In Ohio, licensed child care providers must meet health and safety standards as directed by the state. Providers who voluntarily exceed health and safety standards can be awarded a star rating. Licensed providers with a recognized accreditation and/or quality rating – such as Step Up To Quality – demonstrate a commitment to preparing children for the future.

Step Up To Quality

Step Up To Quality is Ohio's Star Rating System for licensed early learning and child care programs. Star-rated programs have better trained teachers, develop school readiness skills, focus on family engagement and strive for continuous improvement. For more information about this five-star rating system visit <http://www.stepuptoquality.org>.

Additional Accreditation Organizations

National Association for the Education of Young Children - <http://www.naeyc.org>
National Early Childhood Program Accreditation - <http://www.necpa.net>
Association for Early Learning Leaders - <http://www.earlylearningleaders.org>
National Association for Family Child Care - <http://www.nafcc.org>
Council on Accreditation - <http://coanet.org>
Association of Christian Schools International - <http://www.acsiglobal.org>

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO EARLY LEARNING AND CHILD CARE PROGRAMS



Early Learning and Child Care Choices

There are many programs in Franklin County that provide early learning and child care services to children and families. These programs are free or low-cost and offer high-quality learning environments that provide comprehensive programming to meet each child's cognitive (learning), social (behavioral), emotional and physical needs. Finding quality care with developmentally appropriate programs for young children sets the foundation for a child's success in school and in life.



What type of early learning and child care setting is right for my child?

There are a variety of settings that can provide quality care. While searching for a program that best fits family needs, it is important to understand the different types of licensed care available in Franklin County. Licensed programs are inspected and are required to meet health and safety standards.

Licensed Child Care Centers - Child care and early learning provided in a center setting. Centers are licensed by ODJFS/ODE and serve 13 or more children at a time.

Family Child Care Type A Providers - Child care and early learning provided in a home setting for up to 12 children at a time.

Family Child Care Type B Providers - Child care and early learning provided in a home setting for up to six children at a time.

Licensing compliance reports as well as the star rating on licensed facilities are available at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepUpQuality.stm>.





Searching for Early Learning and Child Care

Parents should be prepared to ask questions while visiting child care providers. Plan to visit more than one program with your child if possible. Below is a sample list of questions that parents should ask when searching for a child care provider:

1. How does this program help prepare children for kindergarten?
2. Do teachers have current training on early childhood education standards and techniques?
3. What child care accreditation(s) or quality rating(s) does this program have?
4. What kinds of accommodations are made for children with special needs and/or disabilities?

Counselors are available through Action for Children to assist with the search or information is available online at <http://www.actionforchildren.org>.



Free or Low-Cost Early Learning and Child Care Programs in Franklin County

Publicly Funded Child Care

Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC), also known as subsidized child care, is an income-based assistance program available through Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services. PFCC helps eligible families pay for the cost of child care services for children under the age of 13 and children with disabilities up to the age of 18.

PFCC Eligibility Guidelines / Verification Requirements

- Participation in an approved work/school activity
- Citizenship for each child needing care
- Household size
- Meet current income eligibility requirement for household size* (Note: eligibility requirements vary for new applicants and existing applicants)
- Choose a licensed home provider, child care center, school-age program or Head Start program

*Applicants may be required to pay a co-payment based on gross monthly income and family size

Applying for PFCC

To learn more about how to qualify for PFCC and to obtain an application, visit <https://communityportal.fcdjfs.franklincountyohio.gov> or call 614.233.2000.

Head Start

Head Start programs provide a positive learning environment for children, from birth to age 5, that supports children's growth in many areas including language, literacy, and social and emotional development. Many Head Start programs also provide Early Head Start, which serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women and their families. Eligibility guidelines vary and caretakers should contact an Early Head Start provider directly to apply or determine eligibility.

The Child Development Council of Franklin County (CDCFC)

Children ages 3-5 years old may enroll in full-day, part-day or home-based preschool options, which focus on providing school readiness skills and social services to the entire family. Early Head Start is available for infants and toddlers ages 6 weeks - 3 years, and for pregnant women. All services are available for children with special needs and/or disabilities.

Qualifications: Verification of income; pre-approval for PFCC and verification of at least 32 hours per week of parent qualifying activities are required for enrollment in full-day Head Start or Early Head Start classes; families must live in a qualifying ZIP code.

Ages: 3-5 years (Head Start); 6 weeks - 3 years (Early Head Start) **Fees:** Free

Contact: CDCFC at 614.460.8740 or online at <http://www.cdcheadstart.org>

YMCA of Central Ohio

Children who are 3-5 years old and are not yet eligible for kindergarten may attend this program at one of several locations. All services are available for children with special needs and/or disabilities.

Qualifications: Verification of income; families must live in a qualifying ZIP code.

Ages: 3-5 years **Fees:** Free

Contact: YMCA at 614.409.2844 or online at <http://www.ymcacolumbus.org/headstart>

Early Start Columbus City of Columbus

This school readiness program prepares children for entry into kindergarten. The program is a full-day, full-year or school-year program that supports working families that meet current income eligibility requirements.

Qualifications: CCS district resident; verification of income

Ages: 4 years **Fees:** Fees are based on family size and income

Contact: Action for Children at 614.224.0222 or online at <http://www.actionforchildren.org>

Columbus City Schools (CCS) Pre-Kindergarten Program

CCS' full-day, pre-kindergarten program provides comprehensive services to preschool age children and their families in the following areas: education, health and social services and family/community partnerships.

Qualifications: CCS district resident; verification of income

Ages: 4 years **Fees:** Fees are based on family size and income

Contact: CCS at 614.365.5822 or online at <http://www.ccssoh.us/Pre-Kindergarten.aspx>