

Action for Children



Navigating the Challenges of Finding Child Care

Finding quality child care can be challenging in the best of circumstances. When you cannot find care options that meet your family's needs, it can be overwhelming. The resources and tips below can help you navigate this challenge and consider alternatives some families have turned to when traditional, licensed child care is not available.

Connect with an Action for Children Specialist

Free Search for Licensed Child Care

Are you looking for a licensed child care center or licensed home but are unsure where to start? Licensed child care is a choice made by families every day. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and the Ohio Department of Education license care; meaning that the program must adhere to defined health and safety standards and that the programs receive visits from the respective agency to ensure standards are being met.

Every day our experts help parents like you take the guess work out of choosing child care by:

- Locating full & part time child care and early learning programs in licensed centers, preschools, family child care homes and before & after-school programs
- Guidance and support through the child care search process
- Information on how to choose the right quality environment for your family
- Resources on local financial assistance and qualifications
- 24/7 online search access

Note: If your family qualifies for [Publicly Funded Child Care](#), licensed programs are currently the only type of care where these funds can be used.

To talk directly to a specialist, call Action for Children at 614-224-0222 or [submit this online form](#) to start your personalized search.

Nanny or Nanny Search Agency

There are agencies and online search tools that focus on linking families to nanny's or babysitters that may serve as a good fit for your family. This may fit your family if you are looking for a temporary solution like summer care or a back-up provider to use for

emergency or sick care. It may also be an option to consider if you have a varied work schedule (overnight, weekend, or rotating work schedule) or are looking for care in your own home.

Options to consider:

[Care.com](#)

[Juggle](#)

[Bungalowbranch](#)

[Sittercity](#)

[The Columbus Nanny Agency](#)

However, these providers may not be – likely are not – licensed or regulated. You can use our [Take the Time](#) and [5C Checklist \(English\)](#) to help determine what to look for and use our sample interview questions to ensure that your child will have a safe, nurturing experience where he/she can learn and grow. We also have a [Spanish 5C Checklist](#).

Community Supports & Alternate Solutions

It truly does take a village to raise a child, and parents may consider reaching out to community connections such as family, friends and neighbors to think of creative solutions to gaps in child care needs.

- **Nanny Share:** If you are unable to afford a nanny, you can consider sharing the cost of a nanny with a friend or neighbor that has a similar schedule to share the cost.
- **Care Share Co-op:** Connecting with family/friend/neighbor to take turns watching each other's children while the other works.
- **Before/After School or Bus Stop Co-op:** Connect with families who share your bus stop, create a schedule so that parents rotate bus stop duty which can allow flexibility and lessen the stress it may have on interfering with work start times. The same could be done for before or after school care.
Tip: add a trusted person (family, close friend or neighbor) to your child's school pick up list in case of emergency so you have a back up plan in place.
- **Unlicensed Home Providers:** There are many providers who choose to provide child care in their home and not become licensed by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. This type of care is legal in Ohio, but is limited to providing care for no more than 6 children at one time. Again, because these individuals are not licensed, you do not have an independent way of knowing about their

background, experience, or expertise nor the assurance that the services they provide are subject to safety and health inspections. This type of home provider can provide flexibility both in schedule and in price/fee. Like any type of care option, you should schedule a visit and conduct an interview to determine for yourself if it is a safe and nurturing environment. Our [Take the Time](#) and [5C Checklist \(English\)](#) can help you prepare for your visit.

Staying Home Alone

Some older school age children may be ready to stay home alone. Follow these tips in our [Home Alone Guide](#) to see if it's the right time for your child to take on this new responsibility and to stay safe.

Other resources for staying home alone:

- Connect with your local fire department about having your older children learn about fire safety, staying at home alone, and more.
- Consider signing your child up for CPR and First Aide classes
- If you have an older sibling at home, you can register them for a Basic Babysitter Training Class for safety tips and best practices on caring for younger children. [Nationwide Children's Hospital](#) is now offering these classes virtually.

Summer Care Options

- **Student Care:** High school or college students on summer break may be a good option if you are struggling to find summer care. You can reach out to local universities and colleges in their education or child development department to see if students are looking for summer internships or work.
- **Summer Camps:** Summer camps are typically a great option for families. However, due to the current Covid-19 health crisis, many summer programs have closed or have gone to a virtual platform. Below are resources that may be helpful but remember to research the current status of programs:
 - [City of Columbus Parks and Recreation Camps](#)
 - [Sandlot Westerville Sports Camp](#)
 - [Columbus Parent Summer Camp Guide](#) *This was published before Covid-19 closures, please call to see if camps are still open.
 - Virtual Camp Opportunities:
[YMCA Virtual Camp Wilson](#)

[Summer Camp HUB Free Virtual Camp Guide](#)

****Action for Children does not license, recommend, endorse, guarantee, control or regulate any child care resource provided, this is a referral service only.***