

Guidance for Parents Seeking Child Care

In recent weeks, OCFS has shared information with child care programs regarding ways to respond to novel coronavirus (COVID-19). This document contains important information and resources to assist parents who are looking for childcare.

Please note: if you or your child are instructed to quarantine, your child may not attend a child care program during the specified timeframe. Thank you for your cooperation with preventing the spread of this disease.

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs) provide services to parents in every county of New York State. If you are looking for child care, the CCR&R that serves your county is a great place to start. CCR&R staff will ask you about the kind of care you are looking for, the ages of your children, the hours of care you need and other specifics such as any special needs your child might have. Based on that information, they will be able to give you a list of providers that most closely meet your needs. Remember, though, this list is just a starting point - you will need to contact the provider to see if they have space for your child and you will want to visit the child care provider you select to make sure for yourself that this is the right match for you. There are 34 CCR&Rs available in New York State. A complete listing of CCR&Rs can be found on the OCFS website at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/referralagencies.asp>

Search for Child Care Programs

If you would like to start your search on your own, the Search for Child Care page on the OCFS website will allow you to search the entire database of regulated child care providers in New York State (except for day care centers in New York City). This information can be found at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/childcare/looking.asp>

You can look up a specific provider by name, or all the providers in a particular county or even zip code. You can also search by different types of care, such as family day care or day care centers. The results for a program will include contact information, address, capacity, when it first opened and the current status of its license or registration.

Day care centers in New York City are regulated by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH). To find a licensed day care center in New York City (also known as group childcare services), use this link: <https://a816-healthpsi.nyc.gov/ChildCare/ChildCareList.do>

Emergency Planning

Consider making a plan for unforeseen circumstances, such as inclement weather and illness, by talking with family members and friends in advance of the situation. In emergency circumstances, it may be necessary to utilize this support system for assistance.

Subsidy-Eligible Families

If your family is eligible and receiving a child care subsidy, you always have the option of identifying backup care. This may include the use of informal legally-exempt care. This type of care is commonly referred to as family, friend and neighbor care. If you know of someone that you might want to watch your child when your child care program is closed, you can have them enroll now as a legally-exempt provider. Background check and training requirements may be required depending on how the person is related to the children being cared for. You can get an enrollment form and instructions from your local department of social services, or on-line at: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/forms/ldss/OCFS-LDSS-4699.pdf> and <https://ocfs.ny.gov/forms/ldss/OCFS-LDSS-4699a.pdf>. You will need to let social services know that you want to arrange for a backup provider, and they will provide information on where to return the enrolment form.

If your family is not currently in receipt of child care subsidy, and you are interested in finding out if you are eligible for a child care subsidy, or if you would like to apply for a subsidy for your child, contact your local Department of Social Services.