

# Selecting Quality Inclusive Child Care Parent's Guide

## Frequently Asked Questions



Supplement to  
DHS Pub. No. 87-91,  
Selecting Quality Child Care  
A Parent's Guide

**Child Care  
Services**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **How will I be able to find appropriate child care?**

- To find the care that is most appropriate for your child, you will need to be actively involved in the search process. As a parent, having as much information as possible about potential child care providers will help you to choose the best care for your child. Some child care providers may not feel that they have the additional knowledge and skills that are required if your child has an emotional, health or intellectual need, or to offer the care your child may need, especially if he/she has a physical need. It will be up to you to inform possible child care providers about the care your child will need.

### **What is Inclusive Child Care?**

- Families should look for a place where each child is treated as an individual with unique needs, likes, dislikes and abilities. Inclusion is for everyone. No one likes to feel left out. Inclusion means welcoming and including all children, regardless of their ability. Finding the right people and programs will enable your child to learn and grow in a safe, comfortable place.
- Inclusion is more than creating a physical space where students with and without disabilities are brought together. All children have strengths and challenges. Working as a team can increase the strength of the teacher and family bond. The child benefits from that relationship.

### **Doesn't every child share the same basic needs: acceptance, care, love and support?**

- Choosing quality early care and education opportunities for your child takes time and effort. Be prepared to do your research on programs and be willing to look for care in advance of your

need whenever possible, and have alternate plans if your first choice has a long waiting list.

- Consider enrolling your child on a trial basis to see if the program is able to meet your child's needs. There are resources available to assist child care programs that care for children with special needs. You are not alone facing challenges with finding care.
- Some agencies offer information to assist in locating child care based on a family's criteria. Your child's school, the state health department, and referral services such as Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral also may have suggestions for finding care.



## **Are there resources to help me pay for child care?**

- The Child Care Subsidy Program is available through the Department of Human Services and helps to pay for all or part of the cost of child care for children up to age 13 while the parent(s) work or go to school. Child Care Subsidy benefits may

also be available for children age 13 through 18 who meet the DHS definition of a child with a disability. Eligibility is based on income and need. Application for the program is made through the local county DHS office. In addition to choosing a provider contracted with DHS to receive subsidy payments, applicants must file for child support against any absent parent(s) and provide work or school schedules and proof of income. For more information about the Child Care Subsidy Program, please call 405-521-3931.

## **What other options might I look for in addition to child care programs?**

- In-home care involves the parent choosing a caregiver who comes into the child's home. Prospective in-home providers must meet all policy requirements including background checks prior to being approved by DHS to receive subsidy payments.
- Head Start programs often use eligibility criteria that allow for children who may be living with a special need.
- SoonerStart offers resources to children with qualifying conditions from birth to 3 years of age.
- Your local public school system may also offer resources to children with qualifying conditions from 3 years of age to 21.

## **I've heard about programs that offer extensive care for children with disabilities. How do I find those?**

- Programs such as Head Start, Easter Seals and other experienced, specialized child care providers have received additional training in order to meet the needs of a wide range of children's abilities and disabilities. Those programs may have a waiting list, so researching options for care as early as possible will let you know what to expect. Inclusive child care programs will have well-educated staff, adaptive equipment and space to include children who may have special needs.

## **What if I need out-of-school time care for an older child who is not able to stay alone?**

- There are options for care of school-age children during out-of-school times and the suggestions offered for finding child care applies to older children as well as younger.
- Not all children with a special need require individual care. Like all children, a child with a special need may occasionally require individual care such as with toileting or eating. Talk honestly with child care providers about what supports your child may need and how working in a partnership can provide fantastic results for your child.
- Not all children with special needs have challenging behaviors, just like not all children with challenging behaviors have special needs. Some behaviors may be the result of the child feeling frustrated for not being able to communicate effectively.

## **Are there ways to help children express their needs and wants to decrease challenging behaviors?**

- Not all disabilities are visible, and some may not be obvious. The goal for families and caregivers is to not judge a child by a diagnosis. Child care providers will need to take time to get to know each child as an individual. Parents can help providers by sharing information about a child's likes, dislikes, need for structure and routine, etc.
- Many times a child with challenging behaviors or a child who may have a special need can go to regular child care. Seek out programs where a child's needs can be met in an appropriate environment. Finding what works with each child is one way that caregivers learn to understand what to expect when working with young children.

## **Should I be worried that my typically developing child will copy behaviors of non-typically developing children; or will they get less attention from the teacher?**

- Probably not, but young children sometimes copy behaviors of others, including adults who care for them, siblings, things they see or hear from television, etc.
- However, inclusion of children with a special need in a supportive early childhood setting has been shown to be beneficial to the child without a disability.
- Families and the community can support each other by offering every child a sense of belonging; encouraging every child's development of self-esteem and confidence in their abilities; and by giving opportunities for a wide variety of friendships.
- Learning from and sharing experiences with other children; developing sensitivity toward others; and appreciating individual differences offers benefits that outweigh the negatives.



## What resources could I use to find out additional information?

- Child Care Warmline  
<http://warmline.health.ok.gov>  
1-888-574-5437
- Early Head Start and Head Start  
[okacca.org/programs/head.start](http://okacca.org/programs/head.start)  
405-949-1495
- Oklahoma Autism Network  
[okautism.org](http://okautism.org)  
1-877-228-8476
- Oklahoma Child Care Resource and Referral Association  
[www.oklahomachildcare.org](http://www.oklahomachildcare.org)  
1-800-438-0008 -  
405-942-4179 (Spanish) -
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services  
Child Care Benefits  
<http://www.okdhs.org/programsandservices/cc/asst/default.htm>  
405-521-3931
- OU Child Study Center  
<http://www.oumedicine.com/pediatrics/department-sections/developmental-behavioral-pediatrics/child-study-center>  
405-271-5700
- Sooner Success - Statewide Information and Referral for Oklahomans with Special Needs  
<http://soonersuccess.ouhsc.edu/>  
(877) 441-0434
- SoonerStart  
[ok.gov/sde/soonerstart](http://ok.gov/sde/soonerstart)  
405-521-4880 -  
405-522-4513 (Special needs)  
405-522-4513 (Oklahoma parents as teachers)  
405-522-4499 (Preschool programs) -

Other resources include 2-1-1, your child's pediatrician, your local school district and community organizations.



## Child Care Services

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