



# Which early childhood service is right for my family?



Ohio Department of Education  
Ohio Department of Job and Family Services  
Ohio Department of Health  
Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities  
Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services

# What early childhood services are available in Ohio?

	Ages Served	Center or School-based	Home-based	Home Visiting	Special Needs Services	Is there a fee?
Early Childhood Education Grant	4 to KG	X	X			No
Early Head Start	Pregnant Parents & Birth to 3	X	X	X		No
Head Start	3 to KG	X	X	X		No
Help Me Grow Early Intervention	Birth to 3				X	No
Help Me Grow Home Visiting	Pregnant Parents & Birth to 3			X		No
Preschool Special Education	3 to 5				X	No
Publicly Funded Child Care	Birth to 13 & 13-18 with a special need	X	X			Based on income

## DEFINITIONS

**Ages Served** The service is available to children of the ages listed. In addition, some services are available to pregnant women.

**Center or School-Based** The program is offered in a center or school setting, in a larger building that can serve more than 7 children.

**Fees** Some services may have fees that families are responsible for paying.

**Home-Based** The program is offered in a home setting, either in the child's home with an in-home aide or in the provider's Type A or Type B family child care home.

**Home Visiting** A home visitor working for the program visits the family's home on a regular basis to discuss prenatal and well-baby care and promote children's health and development.

**Special Needs** Services are offered to help identify children's special needs and to help families access needed services. Children with special needs may receive services in any setting determined to be appropriate, including all of the services listed in the chart above.

## ★ What if I need help paying for child care?

Ohio has multiple programs to help families pay for early childhood services. These include Early Childhood Education Grant, Early Head Start, Head Start, Help Me Grow Early Intervention, Help Me Grow Home Visiting, Preschool Special Education, and Publicly Funded Child Care. To learn if you may be eligible, visit [ssp.benefits.ohio.gov](http://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov) or contact your local child care resource and referral agency. To find your local agency, visit [occr.org/member-agencies](http://occr.org/member-agencies).

## ★ How should I select a program?

Every child deserves to feel secure and safe. When choosing an early childhood program, you should look for a program that is a good match for your family.

- Identify programs you are interested in visiting by contacting your local child care resource and referral agency, visiting [childcaresearch.ohio.gov](http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov), or asking friends, relatives or neighbors.
- Learn more about programs' licensing status, Step Up To Quality ratings and inspection results at [childcaresearch.ohio.gov](http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov).
- Research each program to see if it might be a good fit for you and your child's needs.
- Visit each of the programs you have identified.
- Ask questions during your visit. Examples of questions to ask can be found on page 5.
- Narrow down your top choices.
- Visit again with your child.

## ★ What is quality care?

Step Up To Quality is Ohio's early education quality rating and improvement system. It awards one to five stars for programs that exceed minimum health and safety standards and promote children's learning and development. An independent study confirmed that there is a correlation between children scoring higher on Ohio's Kindergarten Readiness Assessment and attending a star-rated program. The assessment measures your child's skills in four areas: social skills, language and literacy, mathematics, and physical well-being and motor development. Star-rated programs also were found to have higher-quality classroom practices compared to unrated programs.

## Is home visiting right for my family?

The following are some advantages of home visiting:

- It fits into your schedule for routine visits in a setting where your child is comfortable.
- Your home visitor will work with you to plan activities to help your child learn and develop using parent-child interactions, daily routines and household items.
- It allows you and the home visitor to know each other better.
- It allows for highly individualized services.
- Your home visitor will work with other service providers to coordinate all the things your family needs.

## What are signs of a quality program?

<b>Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Do children seem happy and comfortable?</li><li>• Is the setting clean, bright, cheerful and safe?</li><li>• Is there a good mix of active and quiet activities?</li><li>• Are the pictures and art displayed at the child's eye level?</li><li>• Are there enough learning materials for all children?</li><li>• Is there enough room for children to move around?</li><li>• Is there a way to check on your child's progress during the day?</li></ul>
<b>Caregiver</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does the caregiver interact warmly with children?</li><li>• Does the caregiver seem to enjoy children?</li><li>• Are the children provided choices?</li><li>• Are the children encouraged to help themselves?</li><li>• Do you feel like the caregiver will listen to your questions/concerns?</li><li>• How does the caregiver handle behavior problems?</li></ul>
<b>Programming</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the program Step Up To Quality rated?</li><li>• Are there opportunities for parent participation?</li><li>• What is the cost? Are there alternative methods of payment?</li><li>• What are the days and hours of operation?</li><li>• What resources does the program offer to families?</li><li>• What is the program's sick child policy?</li><li>• Does the program offer transportation for children?</li></ul>

# Program Visit Checklist

<b>Answer each question by filling in "YES" or "NO"</b>	<b>Program 1</b> _____ _____	<b>Program 2</b> _____ _____	<b>Program 3</b> _____ _____
<b>Is the program Step Up To Quality Rated?</b>			
<b>Do the children seem happy and comfortable?</b>			
<b>Are there enough learning materials for all children?</b>			
<b>Does the caregiver interact warmly with children?</b>			
<b>Are children encouraged to help themselves?</b>			
<b>Will your child be comfortable in this program?</b>			
<b>Do you feel like the caregiver will listen to your concerns?</b>			

- **BOLD Beginning!** Provides information for families about child development and available resources.  
[boldbeginning.ohio.gov](http://boldbeginning.ohio.gov)
- **The Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association (OCCRRA):** Provides professional development and technical assistance to local child care, early learning, and out-of-school-time programs.  
[occrra.org](http://occrra.org) (877) 547-6978
- **The Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD):** Responsible for statewide programs and services for Ohioans with developmental disabilities, including Early Intervention.  
[dodd.ohio.gov](http://dodd.ohio.gov) (800) 617-6733
- **The Ohio Department of Education (ODE):** Responsible for preschool licensing, Preschool Special Education, and school-age programs, as well as the Early Childhood Education Grant, Autism Scholarship and other supports.  
[education.ohio.gov](http://education.ohio.gov) (877) 644-6338  
To view current inspection reports for licensed programs, visit [childcaresearch.ohio.gov](http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov).
- **The Ohio Department of Health (ODH):** ODH's mission is to protect and improve the health of all Ohioans by preventing disease, promoting good health, and ensuring access to quality care. ODH provides access to birth/death records, immunization clinics, health education, and support for maternal and child health initiatives, including Home Visiting and other services and programs.  
[odh.ohio.gov](http://odh.ohio.gov) (614) 466-3543
- **The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS):** Licenses child center centers and family child care homes; supervises Ohio's Publicly Funded Child Care Program, public assistance, job services, unemployment insurance, child and adult protective services, adoption and child support programs.  
[jfs.ohio.gov/cdc](http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc) (877) 302-2347  
To view current inspection reports for licensed programs, visit [childcaresearch.ohio.gov](http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov).
- **The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS):** Offers crisis intervention and mental health education planning and support.  
[mha.ohio.gov](http://mha.ohio.gov) (877) 275-6364





From:

To: