

Making Childcare Decisions During Uncertain Times

Along with many other challenges that all of us are facing in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, families with children of all ages are going back to work before many of Dare County's early care and education centers, family child care homes and school age summer camps are ready to reopen. While a few licensed child care centers and homes have remained open for essential personnel during the pandemic, other programs are waiting to make safe decisions about when they will be opening their doors again.

Children & Youth Partnership (CYP)

CYP has a Child Care Resource and Referral Specialist who can provide more information about the licensed programs in Dare County and share other resources to help you learn about alternatives. For more information, visit darekids.org or contact CYP by email at cypobx@darekids.org or call 252.441.0614 and leave a message for a return call.

Dare County Department of Health & Human Services (DCDHHS)

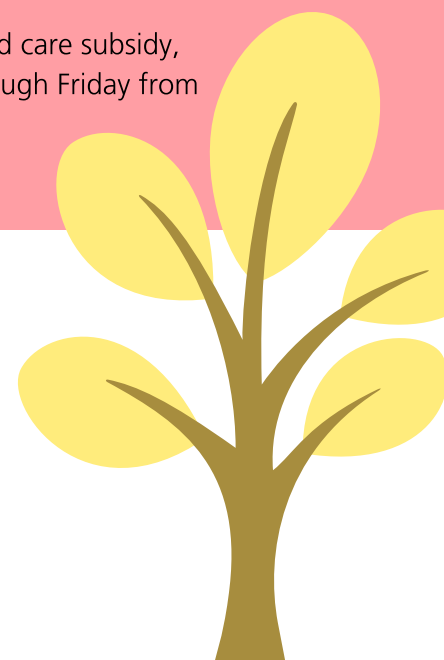
DCDHHS' Social Services Division administers the Subsidized Child Care Program. The amount the state pays for child care depends on the family's situational criteria, the family's income, and the cost of the care provided. You may be eligible to receive child care assistance if one or more of these situations apply to your family:

- You are working or attempting to find work;
- You are in school or a job training program;
- Your child is receiving child protective services, your child has developmental needs; or
- Your family is in crisis.

To receive additional information or to begin the process of applying for child care subsidy, contact Yvette Pollock at pollocky@dcdss.org or 252.475.5536 Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

What do I do if my child care is closed?

If your child is enrolled in a center or home that is closed due to the pandemic, ask your center's director what they suggest for back-up care until the program can safely reopen. Speak with your employer, co-workers, church community, family, friends and neighbors. They may have ideas and helpful suggestions for finding care for your child.



What do I need to consider when seeking child care?

Getting very clear about your concerns for your child when someone else is watching them and communicating those upfront is a good strategy for ensuring a strong relationship between you and your provider and a higher quality of care for your child.

- Speak to as many people as possible about the caregiver.
- Consider your weekly budget.
- Lay out your schedule, so your child care provider knows the times you'll need care.
- Consider how far you will travel for appropriate care.
- Locate care that can accommodate the ages of your children and their developmental needs.
- Be sure they are aware of any allergies.
- Make sure they know how to reach you at all times.



Questions to Ask

- Are there age appropriate toys?
- What are the sleeping arrangements?
- What are the hand-washing and hygiene practices?
- What are expectations regarding food and snacks?
- What are the daily routines?
- How are children disciplined?
- How will children travel?
- Is a car seat needed?
- What is the policy on screen time?

What should I consider before choosing a family member, friend or neighbor?

In North Carolina, licensed school age and early care and education programs are accountable to health and safety requirements. If you choose a family member, friend or neighbor to provide care, there are many safety-related factors to consider on your own.

- How many other children are being cared for and what are their ages?
- Does the caregiver know CPR, basic first aid, and know how and when to ask for help?
- Are there outdoor hazards such as pools or unfenced yards, or indoor hazards like medications, cleaning supplies, and electrical cords within reach?
- Will other family members or friends be in the home or visiting, do you know them, and are you comfortable with them being present with your children?



County of Dare
Department of Health & Human Services

