



Choosing Quality Child Care

Currently over 230,000 children are enrolled in a regulated child care program in North Carolina. More children spend a part of their day in child care while their parents are away at work. This is why choosing quality child care is one of the most important decisions a parent will ever make. Research shows that children and their families will benefit the most from quality child care. Listed below are links to some web sites that will connect parents to lots of valuable information, resources and research available to assist with choosing quality child care.

[NC Division of Child Development web site:](#)

[Overview: choosing quality child care](#)

This page will give you ideas to help you make the right decision when choosing child care and tells you how the Division can help you.

[Checklist: what to look for when visiting a child care facility](#)

This page links to a checklist developed by the Division to assist you with questions and issues that you may want to discuss with a potential child care provider.

[Child care facility search site](#)

The Division offers a search site to assist parents looking for child care. This search site contains information on all licensed child care programs in North Carolina. Web site available in Spanish and English.

[Frequently asked questions](#)

Here you can read frequently asked questions - and answers - concerning choosing quality child care.

[The Five Star Rated License Brochure for Parents](#)

This brochure explains the Five Star Rated License system to parents. The Five Star Rated License system was created to help parents find quality child care that suits their family's needs.

["Selecting the Best...Benefits of the NC Star Rated License"](#)

was designed to assist parents in choosing quality child care. This presentation provides information on the Five Star Rated License system and steps for choosing child care.

*The web links listed above connect you directly to information related to choosing quality child care. You are encouraged to visit other sections on the Division's web site to learn more about child care in North Carolina and how the Division promotes high quality early childhood experiences to children in child care.

[Additional Resources:](#)

[Smart Start: Checklist for Quality Care](#)

This page links to a checklist developed by Smart Start to assist parents with information regarding child care. Additional resources and links are provided.

[National Child Care Information Center](#)

This web site offers a list of organizations and other resources that provide information on choosing child care. Examples of organizations include: Child Care Aware, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), and the Children's Foundation. Many of these organizations have developed guidelines and checklists on choosing child care.

Research:

[13 Indicators of Quality Child Care: Research Update](#)

The purpose of this research brief is to review and to provide an analysis of the research literature focused on 13 key licensing indicators of quality in child care. The 13 indicators were used in the development of *Stepping Stones to Using Caring for Our Children* (1997). This research brief is used to provide guidance for state child care agencies as they think about revising their state child care regulations.

[The Smart Start Evaluation Team of the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute, UNC Chapel Hill](#)

The Smart Start Evaluation Team conducts statewide evaluation of North Carolina's Smart Start Initiative. This web site will link you to several evaluation projects that measure changes in child care quality, family functioning, children's receipt of health services, and the long term outcome of school success. In addition, the evaluation projects focus on other components of the Smart Start Initiative, such as the planning and implementation process of partnership start-up and special studies addressing particular services funded through Smart Start.