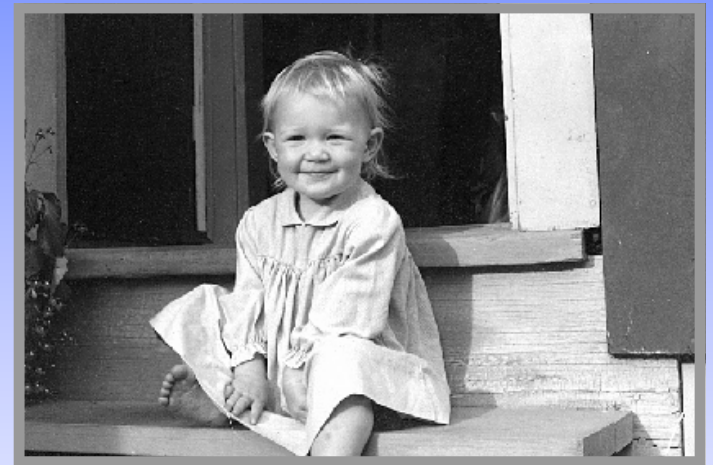


Quality Early Learning

A Parent's Guide



Association for the Education of Young Children
-Southeast Alaska

3100 Channel Drive, Suite 215 - Juneau, Alaska 99801
www.aeyc-sea.org



Association for the Education of Young Children—SE Alaska
www.aeyc-sea.org ~online referrals & info!



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Important Phone Numbers

AEYC-SEA

(in the Juneau Empire Building)
3100 Channel Drive, Suite 215
Juneau, AK 99801

Toll Free Number

1-888-785-1235

Child Care Referrals

789-1231

Main Office, Child Care Food Program

789-1235

Child Care Licensing Specialist

465-4756

Toll free:

1-888-268-4632

150 3rd Street, Suite 107

Juneau, AK 99801

- Information on licensed child care providers
- Complaints about licensed child care providers

OCS -Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect

465-1650

Child Care Assistance Program, Catholic Community Services 463-6184

- Call to see if your family may be eligible for help with child care costs.

Child Care Assistance Programs for Southeast Communities

Juneau 463-6184

Ketchikan 1-800-505-6124

Craig 1-800-505-6124

Haines/Yakutat 766-2854

Metlakatla 886-5872

Petersburg 1-800-505-6124

Sitka 747-6955

Wrangell 874-2260

Southeastfamilies.org

Access the Family Pages guide for more information about local programs to support you as a parent.

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Twelve Ways Parents Can Support Their Early Learning Teacher/Provider

1. Make sure your child is well-fed and well-rested.
2. Drop off and pick up your child on time. If you must be late or absent, call and let your provider know.
3. Say thank you frequently. Show appreciation with a small gift, gift certificate or flowers. Have your child draw a picture for their teacher or make a thank-you note.
4. Read a book to the children for your provider. Share one of your interests, something about your culture, or a talent you possess. Offer to assist on a field trip.
5. Keep your child's emergency record and immunization records up to date.
6. Treat your provider professionally. Be prompt with payments and considerate of nonworking hours.
7. Adhere to policies. Read the information sent home.
8. Arrange a backup plan for when your child is sick or your provider needs time off.
9. Allow adequate time at drop-off and pick-up for your child to make the transition from one care giver to another, and to talk about your child's day.
10. Appreciate that your provider is caring for a group of children.
11. Share information that will assist your provider in caring for you child (for example, a parent being out of town, allergies, or the results of developmental screening).
12. Communicate early about concerns, before resentment builds.



Choosing an early learning program is important to you and to your child. AEYC can help you make the best possible choice.

Our resource and referral counselor will give you the names of several programs that may have openings for your child. **The names you receive from AEYC are referrals only. We do not recommend any particular program, and we cannot guarantee the level of quality in any of the programs whose names we give you.** Only you can make the right decision about care for your child.

We offer:

- Information on current openings.
- Online referrals for parents in a hurry or who want to access referrals after hours. Call for more information or assistance with this service.
- Information about cost, policies, licensing standards, and other information.
- Offer tips about how to decide on an early learning program.

Many parents don't realize that they qualify for help paying for the best learning environment for your child. Check the Child Care Assistance calculator link on our website to see if you qualify.

Confidentiality

Information received from parents/clients about their child care needs becomes a part of our database and is used for referral services, research and grant purposes. All personal or identifying information remains confidential. AEYC does not share or sell mailing lists or client names.

Commitment to Diversity

AEYC serves all families and children without bias and does not permit discrimination because of race, color, national origin, age, sex or disability.

Fee Statement

AEYC childcare referral services are free of charge. A request for donations is included with each referral packet.

Complaints Regarding Referral Services

It is our pleasure to serve you and your family. If you have any questions, concerns, or have found our services to be unsatisfactory for any reason, please contact our office and let us know so that we may better serve families and children in the future.

Types of Early Learning Programs: What to Expect

Child care center, pre-school, Head Start, family child care...there are many full and part day early learning programs to choose from. Here is a quick definition of each. Ask your referral counselor for more information about these options.

Licensed Care:

Not to be confused with a business license, a community care license from the Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services means:

- 1) Everyone in the home or program over 16 has had a federal background check,
 - 2) At least one person with a current CPR and First Aid card is on duty at all times,
 - 3) Basic health and safety standards are met with annual monitor visits,
 - 4) The program agrees to follow the state health and safety standards,
 - 5) Providers have at least 12 hours of child development training each year for family child care, and at least 20 hours per year for programs caring for more than 8 children.
- **Licensed Family Child Care:** Up to eight children, including the providers own children, in the providers home.
 - **Licensed Group Home:** Up to 12 children, with two caregivers present.
 - **Licensed Center:** Care for 13 or more children with enough staff to maintain state ratios (see page 15).

Approved Care:

Care in the provider's home for up to 4 children. This is often the first step for someone starting a family child care program. Everyone over 16 in the home has a federal background check, the provider has a current CPR and First Aid card, and self-certifies they will follow basic minimum health and safety standards. Approved providers can participate in the Child Care Food Program and accept families on Child Care Assistance. Unless care is for immediate relatives only, the provider has one year to become fully licensed.

In Home Care:

Care for your child in your own home, also called nanny care. There is an approval process for families eligible for child care assistance.

Checking on Your Child's Care

It is important to check on your child's care. Stop by during the day and see how your child is doing. Watch your child for changes in moods and attitudes.

If your child seems happy and cheerful, chances are that everything is fine. However, things can change and you should watch for these signals of concern:

- Your child seems to be unhappy or talks about being afraid.
- There is a lot of staff turnover and you do not recognize some of the people at the center or home.
- The provider's behavior towards the children seems harsh, and children are left to play alone or unsupervised.
- There are not enough toys to play with or things to do.
- Your child has injuries that the provider cannot explain.
- If you find that you are worried about your child, or are concerned about the quality of your child's care, you should visit the center or home and speak with the provider.

Talk With Your Provider:

- Talk about concerns right away, as they happen.
- Be clear about your concerns, and ask what they think about the causes.
- Be clear about what you want to have happen.
- If you are unable to resolve your concerns, if your concerns are serious, or if you suspect that your child is being abused or neglected in any way, contact the Child Care Licensing office at 465-4756 or toll free at 1-888-268-4632.



Helping Your Child Get Started in Care

Your child may be anxious and upset about being away from you and spending time in a new place with a new person. Here are some things you can do to help your child feel more comfortable:

- Talk with your child about what to expect. Tell a story about child care and things that might happen there.
- Try short times away from your child to get him/her used to being away from you. Never sneak away! You will only make your child anxious.
- If possible, take your child to visit the program before he/she goes there for the day, and spend time there with your child.
- Talk to your child about what he/she will be doing every day. Let your child know that after he/she plays, has lunch, and takes a nap, you will be back.
- Ask the provider if your child can bring a family photo and favorite toy or stuffed animal, so your child will feel more at home.
- Make sure that you spend time with your child at the end of every day. Talk about what your child did at the program that day.
- Try to avoid other major changes in your child's life when they begin care.
- It is important for your child to see you interacting with their early learning teacher or caregiver. Take time to share information and get to know them.



Exempt providers:

A provider may legally care for up to four children without becoming approved or licensed, but is not eligible for the Child Care Food Program or receive reimbursements from Child Care Assistance. Programs are also exempt if the parents are always on-site, such as health clubs, or special short-term camp programs.

Certified Preschools:

There is currently only one preschool certified by the Dept. of Education in SE Alaska that is not also licensed by Dept. of Health and Social Services. Certified preschools are not required to have CPR, First Aid, or background checks, and rarely have on-site monitoring. They do complete a fire inspection, sanitation inspection, and are required to have insurance, a disaster plan, lesson plans, plan for teacher training, and be non-discriminatory. For more information call 465-4862.

School District Preschools:

Some school districts also offer preschools for children with special needs and their peers. These meet the state guidelines for special education programs.

Head Start:

There are three Head Start providers in Southeast Alaska: Tlingit and Haida, Rural Cap, and Metlakatla Indian Community. Head Start programs offer comprehensive services and have federal and state reviews to ensure standards are maintained. Teachers are required to hold a Child Development Associate credential or degree in Early Childhood.

Illegal programs:

Please check programs you visit to be sure they are operating legally. Count the number of children. Their current community care license or certificate should be posted in the entry. If you don't see it – ask! If you have any concerns or questions, call the Child Care Licensing Office at 888-268-4632.

Here is a link to a summary of the state licensing regulations:



Children: Different Ages, Different Needs

Keep in mind the kind of care and attention your baby, toddler, preschooler, or older child gets from you at home. They should get similar care and attention from their early learning teacher or provider.

Infants (0-18 months)*

Babies need to be picked up, cuddled, and talked to. They need to be held when they are fed. Their feeding and nap times should be on the child's regular schedule. There should be enough adults in the home or center to give all the babies the attention they need. Babies like to play with (and put in their mouths) soft, colorful, squeaky toys. There should be cardboard or vinyl books that are accessible for babies to see, touch, and even chew. Be sure there is plenty of room for the baby to crawl around, and room to play with push-pull toys.

Toddlers (18-30 months)*

Toddlers like to push big toys, ride large rocking toys, climb, slide, jump, and play actively. They also like to play with blocks and other things they can stack and organize. They like to "play pretend" and they should have toys to help them do that: brooms, mops, and sponges; dishes, plastic food, and pots and pans, toy telephones and dress up clothes. There should be play dough, finger paints, crayons, big sheets of paper, and other art supplies available. Toddlers should have books to "read" and play with, time for stories, songs, and puppet games, and lots of talking and sharing with other children.

Preschoolers (30 months– 5 years)

Preschoolers are curious. They like to take things apart and use their imaginations. Preschoolers like to know the "how and "why" of things. Preschoolers like to build and make things move. They like to run, jump, dance, play with balls, puzzles, blocks, and string beads. They like to play "make believe" with real everyday things. They may not like to share, so there should be a couple of the same toys and games.

*Please note: Openings are limited for Infant and Toddler Care. See page 15, "If you still can't find care".



Suggestions If You Still Can't Find a Program that Meets Your Needs

- Check online, www.aeyc-sea.org. Openings are updated weekly.
- Stay in touch with the Staff at AEYC. Let them know if the list of referrals given to you was not able to meet your needs or ask them for other suggestions.
- Look in a different location. Perhaps there isn't a location near your home but there may be near your workplace, or vice versa. Think of your typical route to work or your daily activities, and think of areas that are convenient for you near those places. You may have to drive an extra mile to make your child smile!
- If you are looking for part time care consider asking a friend, neighbor, or co-worker to share a full time spot with you at a program.
- Discuss your child care need with your employer and with co-workers. If many of your co-workers are having difficulty, your employer needs to know.
- If there is a waiting list for a provider that suits your needs, make sure you are on it; sometimes opening occur unexpectedly.
- Make a short term plan for child care with friends or relatives who are able to assist you, but keep working with the staff at AEYC until you find the kind of care you are looking for.
- Do you know anyone interested in starting an early learning program? Have them call us!



Step Five: Decide

| | Program One | Program Two | Program Three |
|---|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| May I have two parent references of parents who are using the program)? * | | | |
| Which program will best meet the needs of my child and family? | | | |
| Where will my child be happy and secure? | | | |

Complaints:

*As part of your reference checking we encourage you to call or visit the Child Care Licensing office at 150 3rd St, Suite 107 in Juneau, 465-4756. The Department of Health and Social Services is responsible for licensing and monitoring child care centers and homes. They can tell you if complaints have been filed against a program and how they were resolved.

For Approved providers, contact Catholic Community Services at 463-6184.

School-Age Children (5 years-12 years)

Since school-age children have a structured schedule in school all day, they should have many choices for activities after school. The opportunity to play is important. There should be lots of room and equipment for active play, as well as quiet places for reading, painting, doing homework, and just being alone.

Using things children have learned in school as part of their play is a good way to help them learn. It is important not to duplicate school activities. Putting on plays, doing art projects, water play, and cooking are good activities for school-age children.

Does your child need extra support to be involved in child care?

Ways that AEYC can help:

- Provide extra support for families to find a program to meet their child's needs.
- Provide extra support and training to the program to help them to meet the child's individual needs.
- Review accommodations needed for inclusion, and determine additional funding (for families that qualify for Child Care Assistance) to programs to meet needs for inclusion.





How Do I Decide?

Making a decision about the kind of program to choose is an important one, and will take some time. That's why AEYC is here to help. **Think about the process and amount of time you might put into choosing a new home or apartment, a new car, or cell phone plan. This decision for your child will affect their entire childhood, brain development and learning potential. Spending the time now can save you time by preventing having to search again later.**

Once we have given you a list of programs, you can begin your search by calling, visiting, and talking with other parents, and preparing your child to start care.

We strongly recommend that you call and visit at least 3 programs before deciding.

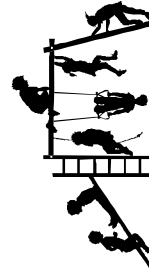
Matching Your Child's Temperament Style With Child Care Settings

This tool useful in helping your family find quality child care in a setting that may suit your child's temperament style.

The Interview Worksheet

Use the interview worksheet to lead you to making the right choice for you and your family. It can help you organize the information you get from the programs you call and visit, and the references you check.

You may also contact AEYC if you need further suggestions or helpful tips for meeting with providers, asking detailed questions, or are in need of more referrals.



Step Four: Count

Count the number of children in the group. Then count the number of adults caring for them. Make sure they meet the minimum requirements in Alaska.

| Age | Approved or not Licensed | Licensed Family Home | Licensed Group Home | Licensed Center* |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Infants (0-18 months) Toddlers (18-30 months) | Up to 2 | Up to 3, one of which must be walking | Up to 5 one of which must be walking | 1 adult per 5 infants 1 adult per 6 toddlers 1 adult per 10 preschoolers |
| TOTAL Children | Up to 5 total, including own children | Up to 8 total, including own children | Up to 12 children per two adults | 1 adult for 14 Kindergartners 1 adult per 18 school age children |

* In licensed centers, use the lower age range in mixed age groups.

Number of children/adults:

Program One

Program Two

Program Three

Step Three: Ask

- Do you have a copy of your written policies I may look at?
- What type of discipline and rules do you have?
- Are parents welcomed to visit any time?
- Are there any other adults present during program hours?
- How often do children have outdoor play, and are there field trips?
- Do the children watch TV? If so, how much and what programs?

| | Program One | Program Two | Program Three |
|--|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | | |
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Temperament Style Worksheet

| | |
|--|---|
| Your child's personal style: | Look for this type of setting: |
| <i>Adjustable:</i> flexible, adaptable to new situations, transitions easily | A group setting with social based interactions and new experiences |
| <i>Wary:</i> difficulty accepting transitions, cautious with new situations | A smaller, more intimate group setting that allows freedom to ease into situations |
| <i>Energetic:</i> passionate, has difficulty controlling emotions and actions | A program where each child has a primary provider; someone who knows and understands your child's needs |
| Your child's reactions to the world: | Look for this type of provider: |
| Expresses their feelings and opinions freely and easily | One who is willing to accept your child's expression of emotions and respects their feelings |
| Fussy or timid | One who is able to patiently help your child ease into new experiences at a comfortable pace |
| Your child's activity level: | Look for this type of setting: |
| Lots of energy; children who explore by doing activities | A lot of physical play and exploration, freedom to interact with others |
| Passive and quiet; explores more with their eyes | Smaller group settings that are less overwhelming and more docile |
| Your child's social level: | Look for these types of programs: |
| Mainly extrovert: enjoys new people and are most content while interacting with others | Group play is best so they can have maximum room to explore and interact |
| Mainly introvert: needs time to warm up to others and tends to be shy | Flexible programs that allow children to adapt to situations and activities on their timing |

