



**Community Resources
To Help Locate Quality Child Care**

Athens County Job & Family Services
740-797-2523
www.athenscountygovernment.com/jafs

SE Ohio Child Care Resource Network
800-577-2276
www.coadinc.org

Ohio Job and Family Services Child Care Website
www.jfs.ohio.gov/cdc

Athens County Head Start
Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action Agency
740-492-6601
www.hapcap.org

IRis (online Athens County Resource Directory)
www.athenscountygovernment.com

Athens County Job & Family Services

Guide to Finding Quality Child Care

If you have questions or concerns
about child care, contact:

Athens County Job & Family Services
Child Care Unit
(740) 797-2523 or (800) 762-3775
jfs@athenscountygovernment.com

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Making the Right Choice for You & Your Child

If you are looking for child care, you probably have a good idea of what you want - a place that is safe, happy and loving, where children can learn and have fun. At the same time, child care must also meet your family's needs. Child care should be convenient, affordable, and offer care when you need it. Finding the right caregiver is often challenging, but it is one of the most important decisions you will make. Positive relationships and environments with caring adults will deeply affect your child's healthy development. When parents know their children are receiving warm and responsive care by well-trained providers, those parents can feel secure in the knowledge that their child is receiving safe and nourishing care.

If Problems Arise, What Should You Do?

Sometimes child care programs that are wonderful take a sudden turn for the worse. That's why it is important to keep a watchful eye and to continually monitor your child care situation. If you believe that your child care arrangement is not safe, take immediate action. If the situation is serious, do not hesitate to find alternative care right away. After all, you are most responsible for your child's health and safety.

Remember that you also have a responsibility to other children to see that they are well cared for too. Report concerns to Athens County Job and Family Services or Ohio Job and Family Services. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but it is the right thing to do. Our children deserve the very best care that we can give them.

For information about certified home providers or to file a complaint about a home-based provider, contact:

Athens County Job and Family Services Child Care Unit
184 N. Lancaster St.
Athens, Ohio 45701
Telephone: (740) 797-2523
Fax: (740) 797-2447
E-mail: jfs@athenscountygovernment.com

If you want a copy of the child care licensing law, a copy of a facility's licensing record, or wish to file a complaint about a center-based provider, contact:

Ohio Job and Family Services Bureau of Child Care
255 East Main Street, 3rd Floor
Columbus, Ohio 43215-5222
Telephone: (614) 466-1043
Fax: (614) 728-6803
E-mail: fcs@odjfs.state.oh.us



How Can You Be Involved?

People who take care of children do a better job if parents support and help them. Once you find good child care either in a center or a home setting, you need to become a partner to the caregiver and stay involved.

- Be sure the caregiver knows how to reach you or others in case of an emergency.
- Talk with your caregiver every day and ask about your child.
- Help the caregiver during a field trip or with a special activity.

Athens County Job & Family Services Child Care Program

Athens County Job & Family Services Child Care Unit can help you make an informed decision about choosing quality child care; and may even be able to help reduce your child care costs!

What Services Are Available?

Subsidized, safe, quality child care is available to Athens County parents while working, attending school or in a training program and who meet income guidelines. A list of certified child care providers in Athens County is available.

What is the Cost?

A service co-payment or partial fee is determined based on a family's eligibility. There is a maximum fee amount established for household size and monthly income amount, which will not exceed the cost of service. Eligibility and co-payment fee must be determined through the application process.

How Do You Apply?

Applications are available upon request at any of the Athens County Job & Family Services buildings and from any ACJFS certified child care provider. Completed applications may be mailed, faxed, emailed or hand delivered to the ACJFS Child Care Program.

No face to face interviews are required as a part of the application process and you will receive your results within 30 days.
Eligibility must be determined through the application process.



What Are Your Options?

Home-Based Care

Certified Professional Home Providers

Full or part-time child care is available for up to six children at one time in the homes of county-certified child care providers. All home providers are required to have criminal background checks, complete training (including child development, CPR and first aid) and to maintain safe and healthy homes for the children in their care. Each provider is evaluated and monitored to ensure regulations are being followed.

Certified Friend or Relative Providers

A parent may have a relative or friend county-certified to provide care for their children. A relative may only provide care for children related to them. A friend may only provide care for children of one family. The certification for these types of providers is a relatively simple process. However, the care must be provided in the home of the caregiver.



Things to Check For During A Visit:

- Experienced caregivers who are warm, loving and responsive.
- A calm, positive approach to discipline with no yelling or hitting.
- Background checks and references for all adults that may be in the home/center.
- Safe, clean rooms and equipment.
- Fenced, safe playground areas.
- Caregivers and children wash hands frequently.
- Caregivers who are happy to show you around.
- Lots of toys, books and activities.
- First aid supplies.
- Caregivers who are happy to tell you about your child's day.
- Healthy foods with plenty to eat for all children.
- Small groups of happy, busy children.
- Rest time.
- Appropriate car seats for any off-site activities.

**Health, safety and hygiene
must be priorities in all child care settings.**

Where Do You Start?

Interviewing providers over the phone can be an efficient way to start gathering information. When you call, introduce yourself, give your reason for calling and ask if this is a good time to call.

Beginning Questions:

- Do you have any openings? Or is there a waiting list?
- What are your hours?
- Are you licensed/certified? If so, how long have you been?
- Who else will have contact with my child when they are in your care?
- How many children do you care for? How many are full-time? How many are part-time?
- Do you have written copies of all your policies and rules?
- What happens if you are ill?
- What is the fee for child care? Are meals and snacks included? Is the fee charged when my child is not there? When is the payment due? Are subsidy payments accepted?
- Do you smoke?
- Do you have pets?
- How do you put children down for a nap? Are infants always placed on their backs to sleep? What do you do if a child refuses to sleep?
- How do you handle discipline? What do you do when a child hits, bites or is uncooperative? How do you soothe a child who is crying or upset?
- Do the children watch television or movies? If so, how often and what kinds of programs?
- Do all the children spend time outside on a regular basis?

Center-Based Care

Child Care Centers

Child care services are available in licensed child care centers that have contracts with Athens County Department of Job & Family Services. The child care centers are monitored and evaluated by the State of Ohio on an ongoing basis to ensure health and safety standards are maintained.

Early Learning Initiative (ELI)

Child care and school readiness services are provided to three, four and five-year olds in a center setting. No other subsidized care options are permitted during ELI hours (6am-6pm M-F). Subsidized care options are available only on evenings/weekends (6pm-6am M-F and weekends).





What Should You Look For in a Child Care Setting?

To make an informed choice, visit and observe how providers respond and interact with the children in their care. Seek a provider who cares about children, is eager to learn about their development, and will give children individual attention and engages them in creative play and exploration. Find a setting that is clean and safe. Carefully check references.

Hire someone you and your children like. Once you have found a good provider, be sure to communicate regularly and openly about how the child care arrangement is working for you, your child, and your provider. Remember, good child care is a partnership!

Why Choose A Certified Provider?

You can find comfort in choosing a certified child care provider because he or she must meet the following requirements:

References - provider must give 3 non-relative references at time of application.

Background Checks - provider and all adults who live in the home must have background checks. If a history of child abuse or neglect are found, then the provider may not be certified or their certification may be stopped.

Medical Examination - provider must verify (initially and every 3 years) that they have been immunized, are free of communicable diseases and that they do not have any special health problems that would not allow them to adequately care for children.

Training - providers have had prior experience or training related to caring for children; they receive 6 hours training per year; they must maintain current certification in infant/child CPR and first aid; and will complete the approved course "Health and Safety in Family Child Care".

Home Inspections - providers' homes are visited at least twice a year to verify that the homes and equipment are safe, clean and healthy for children.

Nutrition - providers are encouraged to offer healthy foods to receive additional reimbursement for the meals and snacks served.