

A is for **ACCESS**

Helping Families Access Early Childhood Education and Care

Families often need help finding and enrolling their children in an early childhood education and care program that is affordable, meets their needs, and that promotes children's development and learning. Did you know there are local and national resources to help families locate and access needed early education and care arrangements?

What you can do

Here are four ways to help families access an early childhood education and care program:

1. Use online tools to search for available early childhood education and care providers.

Recent federal legislation has resulted in the development of a national search engine designed to help families find early childhood education and care options.

<https://childcare.gov/>

2. When searching online, look for markers of quality.

Trustworthy online search tools display important information about the type and quality of services provided by early childhood education and care providers. Look for ratings of quality, whether or not the program is accredited by a reputable organization, and the program's history of compliance with health and safety regulations.

3. Contact your state or local Child Care Resource and Referral agency.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies help families find early childhood education and care services. They have staff trained to answer families' questions about early childhood education and care and to help families find resources that make services more affordable.

<https://childcare.gov/state-resources-home>

4. Explore resources that help families afford high-quality early childhood education and care services.

Many states have state-managed voucher programs, public preschool programs, and federally sponsored Early Head Start/Head Start programs. These resources can help provide families with supports to access early education and care options.

<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>

What we are doing

The Anita Zucker Center works with local communities and state agencies to research and address obstacles families face when trying to access high-quality early childhood education and care for their children.

Visit our website to access more information or resources and learn more about what we are doing.