Athens County Child Care Directory
2012-2013

Athens Community Child Care Partnership
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The Athens Community Child Care Partnership is an outcome from Ohio University’s 2006 – 2007 strategic planning process, Vision Ohio. Since child care was identified as a need in two subcommittees of the strategic planning effort, a child care task force was formed to look at how to increase availability and improve accessibility of care so that University and community families could attend school and work. A partnership, among Ohio University, the Athens County Economic Development Council, and the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD) continues the ongoing planning and development to meet the need for quality child care services in Athens County. Ongoing efforts that further the mission of the partnership include: this provider directory, enhanced child care resource & referral services, linkages among current and potential vendors, and local communications pieces. Community members are participating in all aspects of the partnership’s efforts and others are encouraged to become involved.

Program’s participation in this directory was voluntary. At the time of publication, all of the programs represented in this directory are licensed through Ohio Department of Education or Ohio Department of Job and Family Services following their child care licensing regulations. These are the minimum standards in Ohio for operating a child care center. The Athens Community Child Care Partnership assumes no responsibility for any of the programs or the services provided. Parents are responsible for visiting programs, gathering information during the visits, and determining the best placements for their children.

Information concerning enrollment and fees is based on data received in March 2012. Fee structures for some centers may have changed and those changes are not reflected in this edition. Site directors can provide that information.

The Athens County Child Care Directory has been adapted from the Guide to Child Care Programs: In Athens and Surrounding Communities, which was originally created through the Early Childhood Network, a grant funded project, through the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The original publication was printed in 1996.
Hello,

COAD’s Early Care and Education Division has developed a new “branding” to generate new customers:
- Families needing child care
- Providers – existing ones and those wanting to enter the business of child care

We are updating our outreach materials to fit today’s technology-based world. “Ohio4Kids” becomes our new identity wherever you see us. www.ohio4kids.org is the vehicle to promote COAD Early Care and Education’s existing Child Care Resource and Referral services for families and providers. Check us out! Let us know what you think!

When you see our new logo on letterhead, postcards, newsletter, emails, etc. just know it’s the same high quality services, provided through COAD, the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development.
Parent Services...

- Free referrals to child care providers who may meet the family’s need.
- On-line referrals available 24 hours, 7 days a week at www.coadinc.org.
- Provide a list of questions you should ask when choosing a program.
- Provide information about types of programs that exist and what type may best suit your situation.
- We can help you work through client / provider issues to assist with any problems that might arise.
- Provides answers to parents’ questions about quality child care and child care issues.
- Offers a resource lending library with books on child care and child development.
- School-Age Specialist on staff to answer questions concerning school age children.
- Infant Toddler Specialist on staff to answer your questions on development.

Provider Services...

- Helps individuals enter the child care profession.
- Coordinates and provides training for child care providers.
- Publishes a newsletter and training calendar that provides information on child care practices, activities, and other topics of interest.
- Offers a resource lending library with books on child care and child development.
- We can help you work through client / provider issues to assist with any problems that might arise.
- Information on the Ohio Professional Registry.
- Assisting programs to achieve quality rating in Ohio’s Step Up to Quality.
Let us help you find child care.
1-800-577-2276

Experienced counselors are available to talk with you about your child care needs and provide you with FREE referrals to child care providers who are legally operating a child care home or center near you. Experienced staff will talk with you about financial assistance, and how to choose a quality program for your child. Counselors will provide you with information, brochures, referrals, and a parent newsletter to study to help you make an informed choice. Our telephone service is available through our toll free line out of Marietta, Ohio, and you may call Monday through Friday, 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.

You may also do an online Child Care Search by visiting our website at www.coadinc.org/Main.php?page=family-services look for the Looking for Child Care link. At your convenience, our search is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can search by county or zip code from an up-to-date list of child care programs.
Early Care and Education Rating Systems

Step Up To Quality is a voluntary rating system for early care and education centers in Ohio. Participating centers earn one, two or three-star rating by meeting an extensive list of quality benchmarks that exceed licensing standards. Experts say that benchmarks improve the growth and development potential of children. The rating system also gives parents a useful tool for selecting early childhood programs.

The benefits of using a star rated program in Ohio are:

- **More teachers per child** – this allows a teacher to spend more time with each child
- **More qualifies teachers** – more training in early childhood development
- **A commitment** to early learning and Ohio’s Early Learning Content Standards
- **An outstanding work environment** – paid staff benefits means staff is treated professionally, which goes a long way in retaining good teachers

Step Up To Quality was created by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services – Bureau of Child Care and Development to improve the quality of child care in Ohio. Programs throughout Ohio are eligible and encouraged to participate. Parents can get more information about Step Up To Quality and find star-rated programs by visiting the Ohio Job & Family Services at http://jfs.ohio.gov/cdc/stepupquality.stm or by visiting The Ohio Child Care Resource and Referral Association at www.occrra.org.

**Step Up to Quality**

Find out more at: http://sutq.occrra.org/

Step Up To Quality is a voluntary Three-Star Quality Rating System that recognizes and promotes early care and education programs that meet quality benchmarks over and above minimum health and safety licensing standards. With this program, Ohio joins Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and the District of Columbia in implementing quality rating systems. A complete listing of states and a description of the systems is available at www.nccic.org under the topic of "tiered quality rating systems".

The steps are based on national research identifying the key benchmarks that lead to improved outcomes for children. These benchmarks include low child to staff ratios, group size, accreditation, staff education, specialized training, improved workplace characteristics and early learning standards.
Tips for Finding Quality Child Care

What is quality child care?
Any parent looking for child care knows what they like and what they don’t. But how does one judge what is high quality care for different ages and interests? A Child Care Resource and Referral agency helps families recognize quality and make choices that meet their own needs and preferences. The following steps are only the beginning. Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. For more information contact COAD Ohio4Kids, at 1-800-577-2276 or at southeast@ohio4kids.org.

FOUR STEPS TO SELECTING A CHILD CARE PROVIDER

Interview Caregivers

Call First

Ask…
- Is there an opening for my child?
- What hours and days are you open and where are you located?
- How much does care cost? Is financial assistance available?
- How many children are in your care?
- What age groups do you serve?
- Do you provide transportation?
- Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- Do you have a license, accreditation, or other certification?
- When can I come to visit?

Visit Next (Visit more than once, stay as long as you can!)

Look for…
- Responsive, nurturing, warm interactions between caregiver and children.
- Children who are happily involved in daily activities and comfortable with their caregiver.
- A clean, safe, and healthy indoor and outdoor environment, especially napping, eating and toileting areas.
- A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks and climbing equipment that your child will find interesting and which will contribute to their growth and development.
- Children getting individual attention.

Ask…
- Can I visit at any time?
- How do you handle discipline?
- What do you do if a child is sick?
- What would you do in case of an emergency?
- What training have you (and other staff/substitutes) had?
- Are all the children and staff required to be immunized?
- May I see a copy of your license or other certification?
- Do you have a substitute or backup caregiver?
- May I have a list of parents (current and former) who have used your care?
- Where do children nap? Do you know that babies should go to sleep on their backs?
Check References

Ask other parents…
- Was the caregiver reliable on a daily basis?
- How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- Did your child enjoy the child care experience?
- How did the caregiver respond to you as a parent?
- Was the caregiver respectful of your values and culture?
- Would you recommend the caregiver without reservation?
- If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Ask the local child care resource and referral program or licensing office…
- What regulations should child care providers meet in my area?
- Is there a record of complaints about the child care provider I am considering and how do I find out about it?

Make the Decision for Quality Care

From what you heard and saw, ask yourself…
- Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- Which caregiver can meet the special needs of my child?
- Are the caregiver’s values compatible with my family’s values?
- Is the child care available and affordable according to my family’s needs and resources?
- Do I feel good about my decision?

Stay Involved

Ask yourself…
- How can I arrange my schedule so that I can…
- Talk to my caregiver everyday?
- Talk to my child about how the day went?
- Visit and observe my child in care at different times of the day?
- Be involved in my child’s activities?
- How can I work with my caregiver to resolve issues and concerns that may arise?
- How do I keep informed about my child’s growth and development while in care?
- How can I promote good working conditions for my child care provider?
- How can I network with other parents?

This information adapted from: Administration for Children and Families U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

These steps are only the beginning. Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. For more information contact COAD Ohio4Kids, at 1-800-577-2276 or at southeast@ohio4kids.org.

Ohio4Kids is a program of COAD – the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development

"We serve and support all who care for children, so their practices help children develop their fullest potential."
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.

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 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.

If there is a problem with child care, what should I do?
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
Directors: Jennifer Weekly and Martha Crist

Program Philosophy
We want the center to provide a positive learning experience for children. Each child is growing and developing in their own way. Opportunities are provided to facilitate the social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical growth of each child. We see parents and teachers working together as a partnership team for quality programming and positive group experiences for children.

Program Description
- Types of services offered: Part-time/Half-time/Full-time/Before school care/After school care
- Ages of children enrolled: Preschool: 2½ - 5 year olds  
  Before and After school care: through age 11
- Special conditions for enrollment: Must be toilet trained
- Hours: 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday. Open year round.
- Fee Scale: Part-time (15 hours or less per week): $225 per month  
  Half-time (15-25 hours per week): $285 per month  
  Full-time (over 25 hours per week): $465 per month  
  Before school: $50 per month  
  After school: $100 per month  
  Before and After school: $150 per month
- Financial Assistance Available: Contract with Department of Job and Family Services
- Maximum enrollment: Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0  
  Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 5  
  Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 42  
  School age (5 years and above): 18

Additional Information
- There is a $35 non-refundable registration fee.
- Bring own lunch
- Morning and afternoon snack is provided
- For students enrolled in the preschool program there is a one-time $35 book fee.
- For before and after school care there is supervised bus pick-up and drop-off from Athens City Schools and Athens Head Start.
- Conveniently located near Ohio University campus
Athens Church of Christ Preschool
785 West Union Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
740-594-6404
Email: accp@frognet.net

Director: Willadean Dailey

Program Philosophy
Athens Church of Christ Preschool (ACCP) is being designed with two main concepts: 1) To provide a Christian atmosphere that preschoolers can enjoy and parents can feel good about when they go to work. 2) To help parents prepare their children for school.

Program Description
- **Types of services offered:** Part-time/Full-time/Before and After school programs
- **Ages of children enrolled:** 2 ½ – 5 years of age, Kindergarten-6th grade for Before and After school programs
- **Special conditions for enrollment:** Must be toilet trained
- **Hours:** 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday.
- **Fee Scale:**
  - Full-time: $27 per day
  - Part-time (7:00 AM – 12:30 PM): $16 per day
  - Part-time (12:30 PM – 5:30 PM): $13 per day
  - Before school: $30 per week
  - After school: $35 per week
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Contracts with Athens, Meigs, and Morgan Country Departments of Job and Family Services
- **Maximum enrollment:**
  - Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  - Toddlers (30 months to 36 months): 6
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 20
  - School age (5 years and above): 52

Additional Information
- Registration fee of $25.00
- Center provides breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snack.
- All day care available for snow days and holidays that school are closed
- Delay and Early dismissal school care
- Summer care is available for school age children.
- 10% discount for a second child that is part-time and a 20% discount for a second child that is enrolled full-time.
Director: April Bumgardner

Program Philosophy
Our programs are based on offering quality age appropriate activities which include a variety of recreational and educational opportunities. Our philosophy encourages positive decision making skills and development of relationships among peers, parents, and staff members.

Program Description
- **Types of services offered:** Part-time Preschool/Before school care/After school care/Summer Camp
- **Ages of children enrolled:** Preschool: 3 – 5 year of age
  Before and After school care: Kindergarten – 6\textsuperscript{th} grade
- **Special conditions for enrollment:** Must be toilet trained
- **Hours:**
  - Preschool: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM. M, T, Th, F (Sept. - May)
  - Before school: 7:00 AM – 8:30 AM. M-F (Sept. - May)
  - After school: 3:45 PM – 5:30 PM. M-F (During school year)
  - Summer Camp: 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM (June 4 – August 10)
- **Fee Scale:**
  - Preschool: $180 per month
  - Before school: $25 for a 5 day punch card
  - After school: $120 per month
  - Summer Camp: $135 per week
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Contract with Athens County Department of Job and Family Services
- **Maximum enrollment:**
  - Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 0
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 20
  - School age (5 years and above): Before school-35/
    After school-65/Camp-75

Additional Information
- Preschool registration fee of $ 15.00
- There is a $35 deposit and registration fee for Summer Camp.
- Bus transportation is available for Before and After school programs for East, West, and Morrison Schools.
- Snack for afternoon care.
Cross Creek Early Learning Center
8 Harper Street
The Plains, Ohio 45780
740-797-4400
www.crosscreekelc.com

**Director/Administrator:** Suzanne Dietrich

**Director:** Rhonda Dietrich

**Program Philosophy**
Our program is designed to meet the needs of young children. We provide experiences that challenge each child's cognitive, language, social, emotional and creative development. During the course of the day at Cross Creek Early Learning Center, each child will have the opportunity to be creative, learn about the environment, to develop personal skills, and to learn through the caring teaching of our staff and through first hand experiences.

Our staff members are positive role models. They are supportive, caring, nurturing, and responsive to each child. We respect the parent as the primary and most important person in the child's life. We will always try to compliment your role by allowing the children to feel secure and enjoy themselves while in our care. We will promote a positive learning environment for each and every child.

**Program Description**
- **Types of Services offered:** Part-time/full-time
- **Ages of children enrolled:** 4 weeks – 12 years
- **Special conditions for enrollment:** No special conditions
- **Hours:** 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday (year round)
- **Fee Scale:** Infants $165 per week
  - Toddlers/Preschool $150 per week
  - Before school $100 per month
  - After school $150 per month
  - Before & After school $250 per month
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Contract with Departments of Job and Family Services
- **Maximum enrollment:**
  - Infants (4 weeks to 18 months): 11
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 14
  - Preschool (3 years to 5 years): 28
  - School age (5 years and above): 18

**Additional Information**
- Registration Fee $20.00
- Open during early release and snow days
- Bus pick up and drop off to area grade schools
- Summer care is available for school age children
First Friends
6275 Kenney Memorial Ln.
Albany, Ohio 45710
(740)698-4386
Email: firstfriends@ccwconline.com

Directors: Janet Riley and Shelly Daniels

Program Philosophy
The first five years of a child's life is very important in helping the child prepare for future success. Parents are the child's first and most significant teachers; therefore we strive to work together as a team.

Our preschool is staffed by qualified Christian personnel who provide opportunities to facilitate the child's social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and physical growth.

We believe play is one of the most important aspects of a child's life so we take it serious. Children learn through play developing creativity, self-control, independence and responsibility. We encourage children to share, interact, accept people's differences, and learn from each other. We want them to try and solve their own problems while beginning to develop accountability and taking responsibility for their actions. The teaching personnel will intervene and guide as necessary.

Our child-centered environment offers opportunities for both indoor and outdoor exploration, quiet and active play, and trips into the community. Various learning experiences are offered both individually and in-group settings.

Program Description
- Types of services offered: Part-time/Full-time
- Ages of children enrolled: 2 years old through 4th grade
- Special conditions for enrollment: Must be toilet trained
- Hours: 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday. Open August – May.
- Fee Scale: Full-time: $24.00 per day
  Part-time: $14.50 per day
  After school: $26.00 up to 7.5 hours; then after that $26.00
- Financial Assistance Available: Contract with Department of Job and Family Services
- Maximum enrollment: Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  Toddlers (24 months to 36 months): 7
  Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 44
  School age (5 years and above): 25

Additional Information
- Step Up to Quality: One Star
- Child needs to be enrolled in a minimum of 2 days a week.
- No meals or snacks provided
- There is a $145.00 enrollment and registration fee. There is a $100.00 refund with a 2 week notice of withdrawal.
- After school program offers services for students until 5:30 PM – call for more information.
Program Philosophy
The purpose of the Head Start Program is to prepare young children and their families to better succeed in life. The Head Start Program is designed to meet each child's individual education, health and social needs while encouraging the involvement of their parents.

Program Description
- Types of services offered: Center based / Home based services
- Ages of children enrolled: 3 – 5 years of age
- Special conditions for enrollment: Income guidelines
- Hours: Center-based hours: 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM, M, T, Th, F. Home-based hours: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM Wednesdays Open from mid September to May
- Fee Scale: None
- Financial Assistance Available: Free service
- Maximum enrollment:
  - Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 0
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 84 (center-based: 72 Home-based: 12)
  - School age (5 years and above): 0

Additional Information
- Step Up to Quality: Three Star
- Family support workers- home visits
- Bus transportation available for morning center-based session. The afternoon Center-based care needs to have own transportation.
- 10% of families are over income guidelines
- Parent meetings once a month
- Family events 4 times per year
- Fundraisers by parent groups
- Meals and snacks provided
- A Part of Tri-County Community Action Agency
Hocking College’s
Early Learning Center
3485 College Road
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764
740-753-2410
www.hocking.edu
Email: lemay_s@hocking.edu

Director: Susannah LeMay

Program Philosophy
Our mission is to partner with parents, educators and those in the community who have a
genuine desire to contribute to the healthy growth and development of young children into
life-long learners. Our program promotes the physical, intellectual, language, and emotional
growth of young children, building self-confidence and a desire to learn while teaching skills
necessary for success in future educational settings. It is our belief that every child can learn
and will learn with creative and passionate teachers. An essential factor is the relationship
between the teacher and the child. Our aim is to cherish each child’s individualism and gifts.
We feel that we must prepare each child for victory in school and in life.

Program Description
- Types of services offered: Part-time/Full-time
- Ages of children enrolled: 6 ½ weeks – 5 years of age (Kindergarten eligible)
- Special conditions for enrollment: No special conditions
- Hours: 7:30 AM – 5:15 PM, Monday – Friday. Closed Summer
- Fee Scale: Part-time (Less than 25 hours): Infant-$108.08 per week, Toddler-$93.22
  per week, Pre K -$64.59 per week
  Full-time (25 hours or more): Infant-$164.15 per week, Toddler-$141.64
  per week, Pre K -$126.06 per week
- Financial Assistance Available: Contract with Departments of Job and Family
  Services in 10 counties
- Maximum enrollment: Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 12
  Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 14
  Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 12

Additional Information
- Step Up to Quality: Two Star
- Annual Registration fee $25.00
- Annual Activity fee $50.00
- Breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks provided
Hocking Valley Day School
15676 State Route 691.
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764
740-753-5387 or 740-591-4957
www.hockingvalleydayschool.com
Email: director@hockingvalleydayschool.com

**Director:** Kelly Adams

**Program Philosophy**
The goal of HVDS is to provide quality preschool and child daycare services to Southeastern, Ohio and community. HVDS is a warm and loving place where children learn, play, and grow together. We are for kids ages 2½ -5 years and provide activities that are appropriate for the development of each child. We offer music, dramatic play, computers, Spanish, plenty of free time and fun play. We take a variety of fieldtrips. An additional goal is to provide quality training experience for students a quality training experience for students enrolled in the Early Childhood Program at Tri County Career Center. Students in training are under direct supervision of HVDS and Tri-County staff at all times. With high school students in our lab, we have a ratio of one teacher to every 2 children.

**Program Description**
- **Types of services offered:** Part-time/Full-time
- **Ages of children enrolled:** 18 months – 5 years of age.
- **Special Conditions for enrollment:** No special conditions
- **Hours:** 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday. Open year round
- **Fee Scale:**
  - Full time: $120.00 per week for children age 3 and over
  - Part-time: $95.00 per week for children under the age of 3
  - Part-time: 72.00 per week for children over the age of 3
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Contract with Departments of Job and Family Services
- **Maximum enrollment:**
  - Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 12
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 20
  - School age (5 years and above): 8

**Additional Information**
- Before school and after school care for school age children
- Parents provide classroom snacks once a month
- Children may be eligible for no cost lunches at Tri County Career Center
Kids on Campus

For more information go to http://www.cats.ohiou.edu/kids/index.html
Director: Kevin Davis 740-566-8543

Program Mission
Kids on Campus is a rural partnership that empowers underserved, at-risk children and their families in the realization of their full potential through educational, nutritional and recreational opportunities.

Guiding the organization are the beliefs that every child has the potential to succeed, education is the key to the future, and a supportive home and community environment is essential to achieving educational and social potential.

### Afterschool Programs

**Amesville Elementary**
State Route 329 North
Amesville, Ohio 45711
Contact: Crystal Smith
Email: smithc14@ohio.edu
**Children enrolled:** 1st – 6th grade
**Hours:** 3:45 PM – 6:00 PM

**Chauncey Elementary**
21 Birge Drive
Chauncey, Ohio 45719
Contact: Amanda Brooks
Email: brooksa1@ohio.edu
**Children enrolled:** 1st – 6th grade
**Hours:** 3:30 PM – 5:45 PM

**Coolville Elementary**
26461 Main Street P.O. Box 490
Coolville, Ohio 45723
Contact: Crystal Smith
Email: smithc14@ohio.edu
**Children enrolled:** 1st – 6th grade
**Hours:** 3:45 PM – 6:00 PM

**The Plains**
90 Connett Road
The Plains, Ohio 45780
Contact: Amanda Brooks
Email: brooksa1@ohio.edu
**Children enrolled:** 1st – 6th
**Hours:** 3:30 PM – 5:45 PM

**Trimble Elementary**
18500 Jacksonville Road
Glouster, Ohio 45732
Contact: Kevin Davis
Email: davisk4@ohio.edu
**Children enrolled 1st-4th**
**Hours:** 3:15 PM-5:30 PM

### Additional Information
- Snacks provided
- Offers academic, nutritional, and enrichment activities
- Summer Program is available based on funding
Kids Place
49 Connett Road
The Plains, Ohio 45780
740-797-3150
Email: pastor sean@theplainschurch.org
www.theplainschurch.org

Contact: Sean Hampton

Program Description
• Types of services offered: Before and After school care
• Ages of children enrolled: Pre K – 6th Grade
• Special conditions for enrollment: No special conditions
• Hours: 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM, Monday – Friday. Open during the school year.
  3:30 PM – 5:45 PM
• Fee Scale: Call
• Financial Assistance Available: Contract with Department of Job and Family Services
• Maximum enrollment: Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 0
  Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 12
  School age (5 years and above): 18

Additional Information
• Registration fee $20.00 annually
• Pre K available for children enrolled in Public School Preschool
• Bus transportation available to and from The Plains, Chauncey, East, West, and Morrison
• Delay and Early release school care
• Open at 1:30 PM for early release days from Athens City School District
• Open at 7:00 AM on snow delay days
• Morning and Afternoon snacks provided
Nova Learning Center
9111 West Bentbrook Lane
Athens, Ohio 45701
740-592-3744

Owner: Lora Hayes

Administrator: Angela Gibson

Program Description

- **Types of services offered:** Full-time/Part-time/Before and After school care
- **Ages of children enrolled:** newborn – 12 years of age
- **Special conditions for enrollment:** No special conditions
- **Hours:** 7:30 AM – 6:00 PM, Monday – Friday. Open year round. Closed major holidays.
  - Before school hours: 7:30 AM – 8:30 AM
  - After school hours: 3:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- **Fee Scale:** $25.00 registration fee
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Contracts with Department of Job and Family Services for Perry, Meigs, Athens, and Vinton counties.
- **Maximum enrollment:** Infants (newborn to 18 months): 12
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 14
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 14
  - School age (5 years and above): 14

Additional Information

- Parents provide child’s lunch
- Before school bus transportation available for West, East and Morrison.
- After school bus transportation includes West, East Morrison, and Alexander.
- Full-time summer care available for Kindergarten – 6th grade.
Ohio University
Child Development Center
Building 27 Horsebarn Lane
The Ridges
Athens, Ohio 45701
740-593-1819
Email: waller@ohio.edu

**Director:** Cathy Waller

**Assistant Director:** Terry Swank

**Program Philosophy**
The Center curriculum is based on the belief that children best acquire knowledge when they are in an enriched environment that is challenging, simulating, nurturing and safe. Process is emphasized rather than the product or outcome of an activity. The program provides an atmosphere that is multi-cultural, responsive to each child’s developmental needs and acknowledges the existence of multiple intelligences.

**Program Description**

- **Types of services offered:** Full-time
- **Ages of children enrolled:** 6 weeks – 5 years of age (children not yet in Kindergarten)
- **Special conditions for enrollment:** No special conditions
- **Hours:** 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday.
- **Fee Scale:** Sliding fee scale
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Community Block Grant
- **Maximum enrollment:**
  - Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 16
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 24
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 56
  - School age (5 years and above): 3

**Additional Information**

- The Center is accredited by the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs and licensed by the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services
- The Center is a laboratory school that provides professional preparation of students majoring in early childhood education and child development and students from other disciplines; provides a site for research in child development, early childhood education, teacher education, and curriculum; and provides developmentally appropriate practices in early care and education services.
- Ongoing interactions between the home, community and center are encouraged through the use of daily information sheets, conferences, and home visits.
- Free choice in decision making is considered important as well.
- In addition, a diversity of experiences through environment and interactions are provided
Stages Early Learning Center
817 West Union Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
740-593-5700
www.stagesearlylearningcenter.com
Email: heather@earlystageslearningcenter.com
alexis@earlystageslearningcenter.com

Directors: Heather Thompson and Alexis Radcliff

Program Philosophy
Stages Early Learning Center provides quality, loving care for children 6 weeks - 12 years old. We will provide a safe environment that is conducive to the learning levels of each child. We strive to support their continual growth through various activities indoors and outdoors. The staff recognizes the importance of balanced growth so they provide opportunities for mental, physical and emotional growth through creative experiences. By allowing each child the ability to choose his/her activities, this gives them a sense of freedom and choice. Children are encouraged to learn and explore at their own speed in areas that interest them. We are pleased that you have chosen to include us in the growth and development of your child.

Program Description
- Types of services offered: Part-time/Full-time
- Ages of children enrolled: 6 weeks – 12 years of age
- Special conditions for enrollment: No special conditions
- Hours: 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday. Open year round.
  - Pre K: 9:00 AM – Noon, Monday – Friday, September - May
  - Before school: 7:30 AM – 9:00 AM
  - After school: 3:00 PM – 5:30 PM
- Fee Scale: Please call for fees
- Financial Assistance Available: Contract with Department of Job and Family Services for Athens County.
- Maximum enrollment:
  - Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 10
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 28
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 40
  - School age (5 years and above): 25

Additional Information
- Step Up to Quality: One Star
- One time $15.00 Registration fee
- Open during school delays, early release and snow days.
- Bus transportation available for before and after school for East, West, Morrison, and The Plains.
- Summer care is available for school age children
Program Philosophy
At Sycamore Run, we strive to create a nurturing and engaging classroom environment within a supportive community of parents, teachers and other caregivers. We like to think of our school as one big family, working together to raise healthy and happy children! We will work to build positive relationships among staff, parents and administration so that conflicts can be resolved and challenges overcome.

Program Description
- **Types of services offered:** Part-time/Full-time
- **Ages of children enrolled:** 4 months – 5 years of age
- **Special conditions for enrollment:** No special conditions
- **Hours:** 7:30 AM – 5:30 PM, Monday – Friday. Open year round.
- **Fee Scale:**
  - Part-time (downstairs): $460 per month
  - Part-time (upstairs): $415 per month
  - Full-time (downstairs): $735 per month
  - Full-time (upstairs): $675 per month
- **Financial Assistance Available:** Contract with the Department of Job and Family Services
- **Maximum enrollment:**
  - Infants (4 months to 18 months): 8
  - Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 8
  - Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 12
  - School age (5 years and above): 10

Additional Information
- Step Up to Quality: One Star
- Fee scale is based upon upstairs (Preschool, and Pre Kindergarten) and downstairs (Infant Room and Toddler Room)
- Offer flexible hours for part-time care.
- Encourage parent participation in the classroom.
The Growing Tree Preschool
2 South College Street
Athens, Ohio 45701
740-593-3977 ext 14
Email: bigger@firstumcathens.org

Director: Cathy Bigger

Program Philosophy
The goal of Growing Tree Preschool is to provide a developmentally appropriate environment that will stimulate and challenge comprehensive preschool experience designed to enhance the child’s physical, social, emotional, spiritual and cognitive growth.

Young children have a natural desire to find out how things work. The answers are not as important as the adventure of finding out. Growing Tree Preschool provides preschoolers with a joyful environment where they can investigate, build, experiment and discover. Teachers support experiences which will teach children how to learn, providing a foundation for success later in life.

Being part of a community provides children with opportunities to learn and practice social skills, to define their many relationships in and out of school, and to discover the pleasure of friendship. Teachers and parents share with children the discovery of God’s presence and action in their lives. Parent collaboration and participation is an essential, valued part of the program.

Program Description
- Types of services offered: Half-day with morning options.
- Ages of children enrolled: 3 – 5 years old
- Special conditions for enrollment: Must be toilet trained
- Hours: 8:45 AM – 11:30 AM, Monday – Friday. Open September – May.
- Fee Scale: M, W, F: $135 per month
  T, TH: $100 per month
  Five day option (M, T, W, TH, F): $215 per month
- Financial Assistance Available: Assistance available through First United Methodist Church
- Maximum enrollment: Infants (6 weeks to 18 months): 0
  Toddlers (18 months to 36 months): 0
  Preschoolers (3 years to 5 years): 24
  School age (5 years and above): 6

Additional Information
- Experienced and mature staff
- Secular school housed in a church and rooted in a Christian atmosphere. Approach is inclusive and low key.
Additional Child Care Programs

Nelsonville Presbyterian Pre-K School
69 East Washington Street
Nelsonville, Ohio 45764
Contact: Trisha Dean Erich
740-753-6888

Athens County Elementary Preschool Programs

Some public schools in Athens County provide preschool options for children that are typically developing and children with special needs. It is best for families to contact their local school to find a program that best fits their child’s needs. Programs are offered at a free or reduced cost.

Alexander Elementary Preschool Integrated: 740-698-6733

Alexander Elementary Annex Preschool: 740-698-6300

Amesville Elementary School: 740-448-2501

Beacon School MR/DD: 740-594-3539

Chauncey Elementary Preschool Unit: 740-797-4588

Coolville Elementary Preschool: 740-667-3121

Morrison Elementary Public Preschool: 740-593-8001

Nelsonville York Elementary: 740-753-1674

The Plains Elementary Public Preschool: 740-593-8001

Trimble Elementary Preschool: 740-593-8001

West Elementary: 740-593-6866
Other Suggestions for Finding Child Care…

In Your Community

- Talk to your neighbors and ask for their suggestions. Do they provide care or know of someone who does?
- Look in the local newspaper. Is someone advertising that they provide care? Place an ad describing your needs.
- Check local bulletin boards in libraries, stores, etc., and post a notice with your needs list.
- Place a flyer on bulletin boards at local colleges, school, etc.
- Churches may have a “Parents Morning Out,” or similar program, or may be able to direct you to a member who provides care.
- Contact your local job service for someone interested in working with children.

At Your Local School

- Ask the school staff if they know of anyone willing to provide care.
- Contact the Parent/Teacher Organization and ask if they know of someone providing care.
- Contact Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, 4-H leaders and team sport coaches.
- Check with the high school for a responsible student to come to your home, if care is needed after school hours.

At Home

- Ask the parents of your children’s friends how they handle child care.
- Ask family members if they will provide care or know of anyone who does.

If you need any further assistance or information, please feel free to call COAD toll free at 1-800-577-2276. Good luck in your search!
# Immunizations for Babies

A Guide for Parents  
These are the vaccinations your baby needs!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Vaccines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At birth</td>
<td>HepB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 months</td>
<td>HepB + DTaP + PCV + Hib + Polio + RV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1–2 mos¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 months</td>
<td>HepB² + DTaP + PCV + Hib + Polio + RV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>HepB³ + DTaP + PCV + Hib³ + Polio + RV⁴ + Influenza⁵</td>
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<tr>
<td>6–18 mos¹</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 months and older</td>
<td>MMR + DTaP + PCV + Hib + Chickenpox + HepA⁶ + Influenza⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12–15 mos³</td>
<td>15–18 mos⁴</td>
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<tr>
<td>12–15 mos⁵</td>
<td>12–15 mos⁶</td>
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<td>12–15 mos⁷</td>
<td>12–16 mos⁸</td>
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Check with your doctor or nurse to make sure your baby is receiving all vaccinations on schedule. Many times vaccines are combined to reduce the number of injections. Be sure you ask for a record card with the dates of your baby’s vaccinations; bring this with you to every visit.

Here’s a list of the diseases your baby will be protected against:

**HepB**: hepatitis B, a serious liver disease  
**DTaP**: diphtheria, tetanus (lockjaw), and pertussis (whooping cough)  
**PCV**: pneumococcal conjugate vaccine protects against a serious blood, lung, and brain infection  
**Hib**: *Haemophilus influenzae* type b, a serious brain, throat, and blood infection  
**Polio**: polio, a serious paralyzing disease  
**RV**: rotavirus infection, a serious diarrheal disease  
**Influenza**: a serious lung infection  
**MMR**: measles, mumps, and rubella  
**HepA**: hepatitis A, a serious liver disease  
**Chickenpox**: also called varicella

Footnotes to above chart:
1. This is the age range in which this vaccine should be given.
2. Your baby may not need a dose of Hep B vaccine at age 4 months, depending on the vaccine used. Check with your doctor or nurse.
3. Your baby may not need a dose of Hib vaccine at age 6 months, depending on the vaccine used. Check with your doctor or nurse.
4. Your baby may not need a dose of RV vaccine at age 6 months, depending on the vaccine used. Check with your doctor or nurse.
5. All children age 6 months and older should be vaccinated against influenza in the fall or winter of each year.
6. Your child will need 2 doses of Hep A vaccine, given at least 6 months apart.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>2-11 months</th>
<th>12-15 months</th>
<th>16-18 years</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HIB</td>
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<td>OPV</td>
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<td>IPV</td>
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<td>PCV</td>
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<td>MMR</td>
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<td>Hep A</td>
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<td>Hep B</td>
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**When Do Children and Teens Need Vaccinations?**

- Infants 2-11 months 1.5-3 months
- Infants 12-15 months 12-15 months
- Infants 6 months 12-15 months
- Infants 4 months 12-15 months
- Infants 2 months 12-15 months
- Infants 6-12 months
- Infants 18 months
- Infants 15 months
- Infants 12 months
- Infants 6 months
- Infants 4 months
- Infants 2 months

Please note: Catch-up vaccine schedules (vaccines offered to children at risk)
As providers and caretakers, adults tend to view the world of children as happy and carefree. After all, kids don't have jobs to keep or bills to pay, so what could they possibly have to worry about?

Plenty! Even very young children have worries and feel stress to some degree.

**Sources of Stress**

Stress is a function of the demands placed on us and our ability to meet them. These demands often come from outside sources, such as family, jobs, friends, or school. But it also can come from within, often related to what we think we should be doing versus what we're actually able to do.

So stress can affect anyone who feels overwhelmed — even kids. In preschoolers, separation from parents can cause anxiety. As kids get older, academic and social pressures (especially from trying to fit in) create stress.

Many kids are too busy to have time to play creatively or relax after school. Kids who complain about all their activities or who refuse to go to them might be overscheduled. Talk with your kids about how they feel about extracurricular activities. If they complain, discuss the pros and cons of stopping one activity. If stopping isn't an option, explore ways to help manage your child's time and responsibilities to lessen the anxiety.

Kids' stress may be intensified by more than just what's happening in their own lives. Do your kids hear you talking about troubles at work, worrying about a relative's illness, or arguing with your spouse about financial matters? Parents should watch how they discuss such issues when their kids are near because children will pick up on their parents' anxieties and start to worry themselves.

World news can cause stress. Kids who see disturbing images on TV or hear talk of natural disasters, war, and terrorism may worry about their own safety and that of the people they love. Talk to your kids about what they see and hear, and monitor what they watch on TV so that you can help them understand what's going on.

Also, be aware of complicating factors, such as an illness, death of a loved one, or a divorce. When these are added to the everyday pressures kids face, the stress is magnified. Even the most amicable divorce can be a difficult experience for kids because their basic security system — their family — is undergoing a tough change. Separated or divorced parents should never put kids in a position of having to choose sides or expose them to negative comments about the other spouse.

Also realize that some things that aren't a big deal to adults can cause significant stress for kids. Let your kids know that you understand they're stressed and don't dismiss their feelings as inappropriate.

**Signs and Symptoms**

While it's not always easy to recognize when kids are stressed out, short-term behavioral changes — such as mood swings, acting out, changes in sleep patterns, or bedwetting — can be indications. Some kids experience physical effects, including stomachaches and headaches. Others have trouble concentrating or completing schoolwork. Still
others become withdrawn or spend a lot of time alone.

Younger children may pick up new habits like thumb sucking, hair twirling, or nose picking; older kids may begin to lie, bully, or defy authority. A child who is stressed may also have nightmares, difficulty leaving you, overreactions to minor problems, and drastic changes in academic performance.

Reducing Stress
How can you help kids cope with stress? Proper rest and good nutrition can boost coping skills, as can good parenting. Make time for your kids each day. Whether they need to talk or just be in the same room with you, make yourself available. Don't try to make them talk, even if you know what they're worried about. Sometimes kids just feel better when you spend time with them on fun activities.

Even as kids get older, quality time is important. It's really hard for some people to come home after work, get down on the floor, and play with their kids or just talk to them about their day—especially if they've had a stressful day themselves. But expressing interest shows that they're important to you.

Help your child cope with stress by talking about what may be causing it. Together, you can come up with a few solutions like cutting back on after-school activities, spending more time talking with parents or teachers, developing an exercise regimen, or keeping a journal.

You can also help by anticipating potentially stressful situations and preparing kids for them. For example, let your son or daughter know ahead of time that a doctor's appointment is coming up and talk about what will happen there. Tailor the information to your child's age—younger kids won't need as much advance preparation or details as older kids or teens.

Remember that some level of stress is normal; let your kids know that it's OK to feel angry, scared, lonely, or anxious and that other people share those feelings. Reassurance is important, so remind them that you're

Helping Your Child Cope
When kids can't or won't discuss their stressful issues, try talking about your own. This shows that you're willing to tackle tough topics and are available to talk with when they're ready. If a child shows symptoms that concern you and is unwilling to talk, consult a counselor or other mental health specialist.

Books can help young kids identify with characters in stressful situations and learn how they cope. Check out Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst; Tear Soup by Pat Schweibert, Chuck DeKlyen, and Taylor Bills; and Dinosaurs Divorce by Marc Brown and Laurene Krasny Brown.

Most parents have the skills to deal with their child's stress. The time to seek professional attention is when any change in behavior persists, when stress is causing serious anxiety, or when the behavior is causing significant problems in functioning at school or at home.

If you need help finding resources for your child, consult your doctor or the counselors and teachers at school.

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Your son is 2 years old and still isn't talking. He says a few words, but compared with his peers you think he's way behind. You remember that his sister could put whole sentences together at the same age. Hoping he will catch up, you postpone seeking professional advice. Some kids are early walkers and some are early talkers, you tell yourself. Nothing to worry about...

This scenario is common among parents of kids who are slow to speak. Unless they observe other areas of "slowness" during early development, parents may hesitate to seek advice. Some may excuse the lack of talking by reassuring themselves that "he'll outgrow it" or "she's just more interested in physical things."

Knowing what's "normal" and what's not in speech and language development can help you figure out if you should be concerned or if your child is right on schedule.

Understanding Normal Speech and Language Development
It's important to discuss early speech and language development, as well as other developmental concerns, with your doctor at every routine well-child visit. It can be difficult to tell whether a child is just immature in his or her ability to communicate or has a problem that requires professional attention.

These developmental norms may provide clues:

**Before 12 Months**
It's important for kids this age to be watched for signs that they're using their voices to relate to their environment. Cooing and babbling are early stages of speech development. As babies get older (often around 9 months), they begin to string sounds together, incorporate the different tones of speech, and say words like "mama" and "dada" (without really understanding what those words mean).

Before 12 months, children should also be attentive to sound and begin to recognize names of common objects (for example bottle, binky, etc.). Babies who watch intently but don't react to sound may be showing signs of hearing loss.

**By 12 to 15 Months**
Kids this age should have a wide range of speech sounds in their babbling (like p, b, m, d, or n), begin to imitate and approximate sounds and words modeled by family members, and typically say one or more words (not including "mama" and "dada") spontaneously. Nouns usually come first, like "baby" and "ball." Your child should also be able to understand and follow simple one-step directions ("Please give me the toy," for example).

**From 18 to 24 Months**
Though there is a lot of variability, most toddlers are saying about 20 words by 18 months and 50 or more words by the time they turn 2. By age 2, kids are starting to combine two words to make simple sentences, such as "baby crying" or "Daddy big." A 2-year-old should also be able to identify common objects, common pictured objects, indicate body parts on self when labeled, and follow two-step commands (such as "Please pick up the toy and give it to me").

**From 2 to 3 Years**
Parents often witness an "explosion" in their child's speech. Your toddler's vocabulary should increase (to too many words to count) and he or she should routinely combine three or more words into sentences.

Comprehension also should increase — by 3 years of age, a child should begin to understand what it means to "put it on the table" or "put it under the bed." Your child also should begin to identify colors and comprehend descriptive concepts (big versus little, for example).

The Difference Between Speech and Language
Speech and language are often confused, but there is a distinction between the two:

- Speech is the verbal expression of language and includes articulation, which is the way sounds and words are formed.
- Language is much broader and refers to the entire system of expressing and receiving information in a way that's meaningful. It's understanding and being understood through communication — verbal, nonverbal, and written.

Although problems in speech and language differ, they often overlap. A child with a language problem may be able to pronounce words well but be unable to put more than two words together. Another child's speech may be difficult to understand, but he or she may use words and phrases to express ideas. And another child may speak well but have difficulty following directions.

Warning Signs of a Possible Problem
If you're concerned about your child's speech and language development, there are some things to watch for.

An infant who isn't responding to sound or who isn't vocalizing is of particular concern. Between 12 and 24 months, reasons for concern include a child who:

- isn't using gestures, such as pointing or waving bye-bye by 12 months
- prefers gestures over vocalizations to communicate by 18 months
- has trouble imitating sounds by 18 months
- has difficulty understanding simple verbal requests

Seek an evaluation if a child over 2 years old:

- can only imitate speech or actions and doesn't produce words or phrases spontaneously
- says only certain sounds or words repeatedly and can't use oral language to communicate more than his or her immediate needs
- can't follow simple directions
- has an unusual tone of voice (such as raspy or nasal sounding)
• is more difficult to understand than expected for his or her age. Parents and regular caregivers should understand about half of a child's speech at 2 years and about three quarters at 3 years. By 4 years old, a child should be mostly understood, even by people who don't know the child.

Causes of Delayed Speech or Language
Many things can cause delays in speech and language development. Speech delays in an otherwise normally developing child can sometimes be caused by oral impairments, like problems with the tongue or palate (the roof of the mouth). A short frenulum (the fold beneath the tongue) can limit tongue movement for speech production.

Many kids with speech delays have oral-motor problems, meaning there's inefficient communication in the areas of the brain responsible for speech production. The child encounters difficulty using and coordinating the lips, tongue, and jaw to produce speech sounds. Speech may be the only problem or may be accompanied by other oral-motor problems such as feeding difficulties. A speech delay may also be a part of (instead of indicate) a more "global" (or general) developmental delay.

Hearing problems are also commonly related to delayed speech, which is why a child's hearing should be tested by an audiologist whenever there's a speech concern. A child who has trouble hearing may have trouble articulating as well as understanding, imitating, and using language.

Ear infections, especially chronic infections, can affect hearing ability. Simple ear infections that have been adequately treated, though, should have no effect on speech.

What Speech-Language Pathologists Do
If you or your doctor suspect that your child has a problem, early evaluation by a speech-language pathologist is crucial. Of course, if there turns out to be no problem after all, an evaluation can ease your fears.

Although you can seek out a speech-language pathologist on your own, your primary care doctor can refer you to one.

In conducting an evaluation, a speech-language pathologist will look at a child's speech and language skills within the context of total development. Besides observing your child, the speech-language pathologist will conduct standardized tests and scales, and look for milestones in speech and language development.

The speech-language pathologist will also assess:
• what your child understands (called receptive language)
• what your child can say (called expressive language)
• if your child is attempting to communicate in other ways, such as pointing, head shaking, gesturing, etc.
• sound development and clarity of speech.
• your child's oral-motor status (how a child's mouth, tongue, palate, etc., work together for speech as well as eating and swallowing)

If the speech-language pathologist finds that your child needs speech therapy, your involvement will be very important. You can observe therapy sessions and learn to participate in the process. The speech therapist will show you how you can work with your child at home to improve speech and language skills.

Evaluation by a speech-language pathologist may find that your expectations are simply too high. Educational materials that outline developmental stages and milestones may help you look at your child more realistically.

What Parents Can Do
Like so many other things, speech development is a mixture of nature and nurture. Genetic makeup will, in part, determine intelligence and speech and language development. However, a lot of it depends on environment. Is a child adequately stimulated at home or at childcare? Are there opportunities for communication exchange and participation? What kind of feedback does the child get?

When speech, language, hearing, or developmental problems do exist, early intervention can provide the help a child needs. And when you have a better understanding of why your child isn't talking, you can learn ways to encourage speech development.

Here are a few general tips to use at home:
• Spend a lot of time communicating with your child, even during infancy — talk, sing, and encourage imitation of sounds and gestures.
• Read to your child, starting as early as 6 months. You don't have to finish a whole book, but look for age-appropriate soft or board books or picture books that encourage kids to look while you name the pictures. Try starting with a classic book (such as Pat the Bunny) in which the child imitates the patting motion, or books with textures that kids can touch. Later, let your child point to recognizable pictures and try to name them. Then move on to nursery rhymes, which have rhythmic appeal. Progress to predictable books (such as Eric Carle's Brown Bear, Brown Bear) that let kids anticipate what happens. Your little one may even start to memorize favorite stories.
• Use everyday situations to reinforce your child's speech and language. In other words, talk your way through the day. For example, name foods at the grocery store, explain what you're doing as you cook a meal or clean a room, point out objects around the house, and as you drive, point out sounds you hear. Ask questions and acknowledge your child's responses (even when they're hard to understand). Keep things simple, but never use "baby talk."

Whatever your child's age, recognizing and treating problems early on is the best approach to help with speech and language delays. With proper therapy and time, your child will likely be better able to communicate with you and the rest of the world.

This information was provided by KidsHealth®, one of the largest resources online for medically reviewed health information written for parents, kids, and teens. For more articles like this, visit KidsHealth.org or TeensHealth.org. © 1995-2011. The Nemours Foundation/KidsHealth®. All rights reserved.
Preschool offers many benefits — it can be a great place for kids to interact with peers and learn valuable life lessons such as how to share, take turns, and follow rules. It also can prepare them for kindergarten and beyond.

But going to preschool does come with its fair share of emotions, for both the parent and the child. For a kid, entering a new preschool environment filled with unfamiliar teachers and kids can cause both anxiety and anticipation. Parents might have mixed emotions about whether their child is ready for preschool.

The more comfortable you are about your decision and the more familiar the setting can be made for your child, the fewer problems you — and your little one — will encounter.

Easing Your Child's Fears

Spend time talking with your child about preschool even before it starts. Before the first day, gradually introduce your child to activities that often take place in a classroom. A child accustomed to scribbling with paper and crayons at home, for example, will find it comforting to discover the same crayons and paper in his or her preschool classroom.

Visiting your child's first preschool classroom a few times before school starts can also ease the entrance into unfamiliar territory. This offers the opportunity to not only meet your child's teacher and ask about routines and common activities, but to then introduce some of those routines and activities at home. While you're in the classroom, let your child explore and observe the class and choose whether to interact with other kids. The idea is to familiarize your child with the classroom and to let him or her get comfortable.

You can also ask how the teacher handles the first tear-filled days. How will the first week be structured to make the transition smooth for your child?

While acknowledging this important step your child is taking and providing support, too much emphasis on the change could make any anxiety worse. Young kids can pick up on their parents' nonverbal cues. When parents feel guilty or worried about leaving their child at school, the kids will probably sense that.

The more calm and assured you are about your choice to send your child to preschool, the more confident your child will be.

The First Day

When you enter the classroom on the first day, calmly reintroduce the teacher to your child, then step back to allow the teacher to begin forming a relationship with your child. Your endorsement of the teacher will show your child that he or she will be happy and safe in the teacher's care.

If your child clings to you or refuses to participate in the class, don't get upset — this may only upset your child more. Suggestions for leaving kids at preschool are simple but can be hard on a parent. Always say a loving goodbye to your child, but once you do, you should leave promptly. Never sneak out. As tempting as it may be, leaving without saying goodbye may make kids feel abandoned, whereas a long farewell scene might only serve to reinforce a child's sense that preschool is a bad place.

A consistent and predictable farewell ritual can make leaving easier. Some parents wave from outside a certain classroom window or make a funny goodbye face, whereas others read a short book before parting. Transitional objects — a family picture, a special doll, or a favorite blanket — can also help comfort a child. Also, keep in mind that most kids do well once their parents leave.

Whether your child is eager or reluctant to go to preschool, make sure that a school staff member is ready to help with the transfer from your care to the classroom when you arrive in the morning. Some kids may jump right in with their classmates, whereas others might want a private cuddle and a story from a caregiver before joining the group.

Many preschools begin with a daily ritual, such as circle time (when teachers and children talk about what they did the day before and the activities that are ahead for the day). Preschoolers tend to respond to this kind of predictability, and following a routine will help ease the move from home to school.

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Healthy self-esteem is a child's armor against the challenges of the world. Kids who feel good about themselves seem to have an easier time handling conflicts and resisting negative pressures. They tend to smile more readily and enjoy life. These kids are realistic and generally optimistic.

In contrast, kids with low self-esteem can find challenges to be sources of major anxiety and frustration. Those who think poorly of themselves have a hard time finding solutions to problems. If given to self-critical thoughts such as "I'm no good" or "I can't do anything right," they may become passive, withdrawn, or depressed. Faced with a new challenge, their immediate response is "I can't."

Here's how you can play an important role in promoting healthy self-esteem in your child.

**What Is Self-Esteem?**
Self-esteem is the collection of beliefs or feelings we have about ourselves, our "self-perceptions." How we define ourselves influences our motivations, attitudes, and behaviors and affects our emotional adjustment.

Patterns of self-esteem start very early in life. For example, a toddler who reaches a milestone experiences a sense of accomplishment that bolsters self-esteem. Learning to roll over after dozens of unsuccessful attempts teaches a baby a "can-do" attitude.

The concept of success following persistence starts early. As kids try, fail, try again, fail again, and then finally succeed, they develop ideas about their own capabilities. At the same time, they're creating a self-concept based on interactions with other people. This is why parental involvement is key to helping kids form accurate, healthy self-perceptions.

Self-esteem also can be defined as feelings of capability combined with feelings of being loved. A child who is happy with an achievement but does not feel loved may eventually experience low self-esteem. Likewise, a child who feels loved but is hesitant about his or her own abilities can also end up with low self-esteem. Healthy self-esteem comes when the right balance is reached.

**Signs of Unhealthy and Healthy Self-Esteem**
Self-esteem fluctuates as kids grow. It's frequently changed and fine-tuned, because it is affected by a child's experiences and new perceptions. So it helps to be aware of the signs of both healthy and unhealthy self-esteem.

Kids with low self-esteem may not want to try new things, and may frequently speak negatively about themselves: "I'm stupid," "I'll never learn how to do this," or "What's the point? Nobody cares about me anyway." They may exhibit a low tolerance for frustration, giving up easily or waiting for somebody else to take over. They tend to be overly critical of and easily disappointed in themselves. Kids with low self-esteem see temporary setbacks as permanent, intolerable conditions, and a sense of pessimism predominates.

Kids with healthy self-esteem tend to enjoy interacting with others. They're comfortable in social settings and enjoys group activities as well as independent pursuits. When challenges arise, they can work toward finding solutions and voice discontent without belittling themselves or others. For example, rather than saying, "I'm an idiot," a child with healthy self-esteem says, "I don't understand this." They know their strengths and weaknesses, and accept them. A sense of optimism prevails.
How Parents Can Help
How can a parent help to foster healthy self-esteem in a child? These tips can make a big difference:

Watch what you say. Kids are very sensitive to parents' words. Remember to praise your child not only for a job well done, but also for effort. But be truthful. For example, if your child doesn't make the soccer team, avoid saying something like, "Well, next time you'll work harder and make it." Instead, try "Well, you didn't make the team, but I'm really proud of the effort you put into it." Reward effort and completion instead of outcome.

Be a positive role model. If you're excessively harsh on yourself, pessimistic, or unrealistic about your abilities and limitations, your child may eventually mirror you. Nurture your own self-esteem, and your child will have a great role model.

Identify and redirect your child's inaccurate beliefs. It's important for parents to identify kids' irrational beliefs about themselves, whether they're about perfection, attractiveness, ability, or anything else. Helping kids set more accurate standards and be more realistic in evaluating themselves will help them have a healthy self-concept. Inaccurate perceptions of self can take root and become reality to kids. For example, a child who does very well in school but struggles with math may say, "I can't do math. I'm a bad student." Not only is this a false generalization, it's also a belief that will set the child up for failure. Encourage kids to see a situation in its true light. A helpful response might be: "You are a good student. You do great in school. Math is just a subject that you need to spend more time on. We'll work on it together."

Be spontaneous and affectionate. Your love will go a long way to boost your child's self-esteem. Give hugs and tell kids you're proud of them. Pop a note in your child's lunchbox that reads, "I think you're terrific!" Give praise frequently and honestly, without overdoing it. Kids can tell whether something comes from the heart.

Give positive, accurate feedback. Comments like "You always work yourself up into such a frenzy!" will make kids feel like they have no control over their outbursts. A better statement is, "You were really mad at your brother. But I appreciate that you didn't yell at him or hit him." This acknowledges a child's feelings, rewards the choice made, and encourages the child to make the right choice again next time.

Create a safe, loving home environment. Kids who don't feel safe or are abused at home will suffer immensely from low self-esteem. A child who is exposed to parents who fight and argue repeatedly may become depressed and withdrawn. Also watch for signs of abuse by others, problems in school, trouble with peers, and other factors that may affect kids' self-esteem. Deal with these issues sensitively but swiftly. And always remember to respect your kids.

Help kids become involved in constructive experiences. Activities that encourage cooperation rather than competition are especially helpful in fostering self-esteem. For example, mentoring programs in which an older child helps a younger one learn to read can do wonders for both kids.

Finding Professional Help
If you suspect your child has low self-esteem, consider professional help. Family and child counselors can work to uncover underlying issues that prevent a child from feeling good about himself or herself.

Therapy can help kids learn to view themselves and the world positively. When kids see themselves in a more realistic light, they can accept who they truly are.

With a little help, every child can develop healthy self-esteem for a happier, more fulfilling life.

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Enrolling your little one in preschool can bring many questions: How well will my child adjust to preschool? Will my child make friends? Will the teacher understand my child?

Establishing and maintaining an open, clear channel of communication with the preschool teacher can lessen many parental concerns.

**Getting to Know the Teacher**

When selecting a preschool, consider these factors: safety, cleanliness, general curriculum, overall philosophy, cost, and location. Try to meet the teacher before making your selection and make an appointment to visit the classroom. Watch how the teacher interacts with the kids, talk with the teacher, and ask questions.

While in the classroom, pay attention to how the teacher runs the class and how the children respond to his or her direction. If the kids seem happy and interact well with the teacher, chances are good that the teacher's classroom style will be a fit for your child as well.

When you talk with the teacher, ask about a typical day. You may also want to ask specific questions, such as, "If my child came into class crying one morning, how might you handle that?" or "How do you deal with a child who hits others?" Other useful questions might include how the teacher handles discipline, temper tantrums, toilet teaching, biting, or other preschooler concerns.

A teacher's answers can help you evaluate how creative he or she might be in responding to everyday classroom dilemmas. You can also learn a great deal from how responsive a teacher is to your questions. If the teacher appears defensive, uncomfortable, or uninterested while replying, that could signal future communication problems and may mean that the teacher and preschool aren't right for your family.

**Parent-Teacher Conferences**

Some preschools schedule meetings during the year to discuss the kids' developmental and behavioral progress. Usually, these conferences cover play style and social, language, cognitive, and physical development.

A parent-teacher conference should be the time for listening and communicating openly. If your child's teacher has prepared a formal report for the meeting, let him or her go through it before asking questions.

Most of the time, a preschool teacher will emphasize a child's strengths. But the parent-teacher conference also offers an opportunity to point out areas that kids might need to work on. For example, a teacher may suggest writing letters, stringing beads, or practicing cutting skills at home to improve fine motor skills.

If the teacher has concerns about your child, try not to become defensive — this could make the teacher hesitant to discuss any problems for fear of confrontation. Try to ask direct and focused questions, with the assumption that any problems raised are ones that can be solved. Because of the limited time of most parent-teacher conferences, however, it might be useful to schedule a future time when any troublesome issues can be discussed in more detail.
If your work schedule doesn't allow you to attend conferences or if the preschool doesn't schedule them, you should feel comfortable making arrangements to speak with the teacher at other times. Meeting or talking regularly with the teacher will help you understand your child's progress and demonstrate your interest and cooperation.

**Discussing Problems**

When problems such as biting arise, the best tip is for parents and the teacher to sit down and discuss the issue together. If your child has serious behavioral problems, talk to your doctor, who can work with your child and may refer you to a psychologist.

If your preschooler complains about the teacher, try to find out the specifics. Often, preschoolers might complain if they're put in time-out or not given a popular classroom job, such as line leader. It's helpful if you support the teacher and talk to your child about following rules or taking turns.

In deciding whether to bring up a problem with the teacher, it's important not to overestimate a preschooler's point of view. If, for example, your toddler complains that "no one plays with me" or "I'm bored" in school, give it some time if it doesn't seem serious.

Preschoolers' likes and dislikes frequently change, and they're just starting to learn how to interact with other kids their age. Also, a whole range of factors — including whether they're sick, hungry, or tired — can influence day-to-day reactions to school. However, if your child continues to complain, acts different from usual, or is unusually unhappy, contact the teacher at once.

If you have concerns about the teacher's style or performance, talk to him or her first. If your concerns aren't resolved to your satisfaction, your next step should be the teacher's supervisor. Try to work out any problems rather than changing preschool teachers midyear, unless absolutely necessary. Kids who are switched to a new school might interpret that to mean that whenever there's a problem, it can be solved with a new teacher or a new school. It's better to show kids how to work through problems rather than avoid them.

**Building a Relationship**

It's important to form a good relationship with your child's preschool teacher — for both you and your child. Approach the teacher with an open mind and clear, direct questions, so that you can be a part of your child's preschool experience and take pride in your little one's achievements.

Remember to also share praise — both yours and your child's — with the teacher, as well as his or her supervisor ("My child really enjoys storytime," for example). This approach not only makes the teacher feel appreciated, but also creates a positive framework that makes it easier for teachers to receive any negative feedback in a constructive way.

Think of yourself and your child's teacher as a team whose shared goal is to help make your child's preschool experience a happy and productive one.

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Gabrielle takes a break from playing at her kitchen set and reaches into her basket of books. She roots around until she finds her current favorite by Richard Scarry, then delivers the book to her mother, who knows just what page to skip to. Gabrielle sits in her mom's lap as the two of them examine the page — her mom names the orange juice, milk, and waffles and Gabrielle points to the pictures.

Soon, Gabrielle slides off her mother's lap and moves over to her stuffed animals. Her mom knows better than to try to finish the book. For Gabrielle and lots of other toddlers, these little bits of reading are just right.

**Reasons to Read to Toddlers**

Studies show that kids with active exposure to language have social and educational advantages over their peers — and reading is one of the best exposures to language.

Reading to toddlers sets the foundation for later independent reading. But before they can read independently, they need emergent literacy skills. These include:

- having a large vocabulary of words and knowing how to use them
- understanding that words are made up of smaller sounds (called phonemic awareness)
- understanding that marks on a page represent letters and words
- knowing the letters of the alphabet

You don't need games, flashcards, or special instruction for a toddler gain these skills. Just reading to your child as often as possible is the best way to help him or her learn to read independently.

**Helping the Transition to Toddlerhood**

Reading aloud is also an important way to help kids make the transition from babyhood to toddlerhood. Between the ages of 1 and 3, they have triumphs and challenges, so it can help for toddlers to hear stories about other kids and how they managed fears about what's under the bed and tackled the challenge of using the potty.

Kids make big leaps in vocabulary during this time, and learn about letters, shapes, colors, weather, animals, seasons — all of which can be reinforced through books. Choose ones with many pictures your child can point to and name.

But while eager to learn about the world and experience it, your toddler also needs a strong connection with you. Reading together regularly can strengthen that connection, helping your toddler feel safe and comfortable.

**When and How to Read to Toddlers**

Experts recommend reading to toddlers as often as possible, striving for at least one scheduled reading time each day. Choosing regular times to read (especially before naps and bedtime) helps kids learn to sit with a book and relax. But you can read anytime your child seems in the mood.

If your toddler will let you, hold him or her in your lap when you read. It's a great spot for:

- helping kids feel safe, happy, and relaxed
- giving undivided attention
- showing new things
- inviting participation

You'll find that your toddler wants to be independent and successful. Encourage this by offering three or four books to choose from, praising the selection, letting your toddler help you turn pages, and asking for help as you find things on a page. Your child will love to finish sentences in books with repetitive phrasing or rhymes.

Here are some additional reading tips:

- Read whatever books your toddler asks for, even if it's the same book every night for weeks and weeks (and weeks and weeks).
- Read slowly enough for your toddler to understand.
- Read expressively, using different voices for different characters and raising or lowering your voice as appropriate.
• Use puppets, finger plays (like the "Itsy Bitsy Spider"), or props while you read.
• Encourage your toddler to clap or sing when you read rhythmic, sing-song books.
• Talk about the illustrations. Point to items and name them. Then ask your child to name them with you and offer enthusiastic praise.
• Ask open-ended questions — "Why do you think the lion is going into the woods? What do you think will happen next?" This encourages your child to think about the story and to ask questions.
• Substitute your child's name for the name of a character in the book.
• Have fun! Show your child that reading is enjoyable.

Sitting Still Not Required
Trying to read to a toddler who just won't sit still can be frustrating. It's important to be patient and keep trying. Find a book or a few pages that are of interest. If you can't do that, don't force the reading but be sure to try again later. Remember that toddlers love repetition — if your child seems uninterested in books, you may need to find a favorite and read it over and over again.

Some busy toddlers like to stand up while you read to them. Others like to look at a page or two before moving on to something else. Keep the book out — kids might want to return to it later, which you should encourage.

Don't worry if your child can't sit still for an entire book — toddlers' attention spans will get longer soon. You might want to keep reading even if your child moves around. Before bedtime, allow your child to touch and play with favorite toys while you read aloud. The sound of your voice will be a soothing reminder of your bedtime routine and that books are a part of it.

You may find that your child sits still better while coloring or playing with a favorite toy while you read. Don't assume that because your child isn't looking at you or the book that he or she isn't interested or listening.

You want your child to have positive associations with reading, so if you are feeling tense or your child is resisting, consider setting the book aside and returning to it later.

Remember that reading to your child is just one way to encourage emergent literacy. You also can limit TV, talk to your child throughout the day, sing songs together, play rhyming games, and make up your own stories together. Don't forget to provide paper and crayons so your child can practice writing.

Choosing Books for Toddlers
Toddlers want to feel included and competent; choose books they can follow along with, especially those with repetitive text so they can fill in words. Maintain your toddler's interest by choosing books with small amounts of text on the page and books about topics that you know are of interest.

For younger toddlers (12 to 24 months) you'll want sturdy board books with pictures (especially photos) of kids doing the things they do every day. Books about bedtime, baths, or mealtime are all good choices; so are books about saying hello or good-bye. Keep active hands busy with lift-the-flap pages and textures to feel.

Toddlers from 24 to 36 months are beginning to be able to turn paper pages, so this is a good time to expand beyond board books. They're also beginning to understand the mechanics of reading and like books that are repetitive and easy to memorize so that they can "read" along.

By now you will start to know what your child's interests are — whether trains, trucks, or stuffed bears, find books about these things of interest. Kids this age also like books about children, families, and animals.

Toddlers love to look at homemade books, scrapbooks, or photo albums full of people they know (try adding simple captions). Poetry and songbooks are good choices for this age group too. You may find that story time turns into sing-along time.

Keeping Books Available
Read-aloud time isn't the only opportunity kids should have to spend time with books — toddlers love to choose and look at books on their own. Keep books in a basket on the floor or on a low shelf where your child can reach them easily and look at them independently. Keep some books in the car and always have a few handy in your bag for long waits at the doctor or lines at the post office.

Visit the library or the bookstore and let your child select books to read at home. Many libraries and bookstores have toddler story times that kids enjoy. And let your child see you reading — he or she is sure to imitate you.

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Bedtime Basics

Kids need plenty of sleep to rest their growing bodies and minds. But for many kids, bedtime is no fun, and for many parents, getting kids to go to bed—and stay there—can be frustrating.

Heading Off Bedtime Troubles
Make sure your child has everything he or she needs to get a good night’s sleep, including:
- a regular bedtime
- a reminder to start winding down, about 30 minutes ahead of bedtime
- a trip to the bathroom to use the toilet, wash up, and brush teeth
- a consistent bedtime routine that includes soothing activities, such as storytime
- a place to sleep with comfortable temperature, ventilation, and a nightlight
- a bedroom without a TV or video games
- a reminder to stay quiet and in bed, and a final goodnight from you
- praise the next morning for staying in bed

When Your Child Won’t Stay in Bed
- Return your child to bed right away.
- Find out what your child is afraid of—nightlights and monster checks can make kids feel safer.
- If your child cries or protests, wait a few minutes, then go back to check on him or her.
- If your child continues to cry or call for you, wait a little longer each time before you go to check.
- Remind your child that it’s time to go to sleep, and if your child stays quiet, you’ll come back to check on him or her in a few minutes.

Note: All information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor. Review this with a doctor prior to use.

Reviewed by: W. Douglas Tynan, PhD
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Athens Community Child Care Partnership