

Child Care Q&A

Like everything else right now, child care has changed due to COVID-19. You can count on Pollywog to help you understand the changes, including emergency child care, choosing a provider, and find help to pay for it.

How do I find affordable and quality child care?

[Pollywog](#) and [Family Connections](#) are here to help you with this important decision. We are up-to-date on which care providers are open and have space available. Call 541-917-4884 for referrals that are personalized to your family's needs.

Why is my child's daycare closed right now?

When stay-at-home orders were issued for Oregon, all child care providers were required to close to prevent further spread of COVID-19. Child care providers who wanted to stay open could apply to become Emergency Child Care (ECC) providers.

What is Emergency Child Care?

[Emergency Child Care](#) (ECC) is a type of license with additional requirements for health and cleaning and limits the number of children.

ECC was initially only available to children of essential workers, but is now open to all workers who must work outside of their home although children of essential workers still have priority. Any child care provider can apply to become an ECC provider. At this time, about half of Oregon's child care providers are open under ECC licensing.

Get Help to Find Child Care Today

541-917-4884 www.pollywogfamily.org

In addition to classes and resources, Pollywog also provides personalized child care referrals for families. We work with local providers and know who is open and what spaces are available.



Is ECC safe for my child and my family?

Under emergency licensing, child care providers must meet additional requirements for health and safety to operate.

These requirements are designed to limit exposure among children in care, their care providers, and their families. They are in place to keep everyone as safe as possible, including the providers themselves.

Here are some of the ECC requirements for child care providers:

- ECC providers must follow requirements for cleaning, record keeping, daily health checks of staff and children, and the number of children in their care. They must plan activities that allow for physical distance between children, like outdoor play. Field trips must be postponed or cancelled.
- An ECC child care provider must keep 'stable' groups of children. This simply means that the groups of children will not change in order to limit virus exposure as much as possible. This also helps with tracing if someone shows symptoms.
- ECC providers are required to have flexible sick leave policies for both staff and children so no one has to worry about losing a job or a child care spot if they need to stay home for an illness.
- ECC providers are required to communicate with the health department regarding any confirmed cases in staff or children.

Choosing Good Child Care

Child care can vary widely, from small home-based providers to larger center-based care. Parents who are looking for child care can rely on the licensing requirements of Oregon to help them find safe child care that works for their family.

The Early Learning Division (ELD) is the government agency in charge of child care licensing, through its Office of Child Care (OCC). Most child care falls into one of three categories: [Registered Family Child Care](#), [Certified Family Child Care](#), and [Certified Center Child Care](#).

All providers in these categories undergo background checks, meet training requirements, and have health and safety reviews. They also must follow rules about the number of children and the ratio of children to adults based on age.

Child care providers who are not required to be licensed include family members, providers working in the family's home, and those caring for three or fewer child care children. These providers are in the license-exempt category but still must comply with safety requirements.

Parents have many factors to consider when choosing a care provider for their children. [Family Connections](#) at LBCC is a free resource that gives parents referrals for providers who are a good fit for their family. They also have a [checklist for parents](#) to use when evaluating child care options and can help families find ways to pay for child care.

The ELD and OCC also maintain a public database of regulated providers called the [Child Care Safety Portal](#). Parents can use this portal to search for a provider's history, including annual inspections and license changes as well as any complaint investigations.

Help Paying for Child Care

The crisis of COVID-19 required many child care providers to close temporarily, for the safety of families and providers alike.

Employment-Related Day Care (ERDC) helps eligible families pay for child care while they are working. It helps parents who are eligible to access child care by approved providers.

To help families and providers in the wake of these closures, Oregon DHS temporarily raised eligibility limits for ERDC.

To learn more about ERDC or to apply online, go to the [ERDC information page](#) or call your [local DHS office](#).



More child care resources for families:

- [Linn/Benton/Lincoln Early Learning Hub](#) - connects child care partners and provides resources and support to families through Pollywog and Family Connections.
- Oregon's [Early Learning Division](#) - find information on child care regulations and more, the Child Care Safety Portal, and updates related to COVID-19.
- DHS's [Child Care Assistance Tips](#) - printable list to help parents choose the right child care provider for their family.
- [Find Child Care Oregon](#) - online child care search and tips for parents.
- [Inclusive Partners](#) - support and information for families with children with special needs.
- [Oregon's SPARK](#) - quality rating system for child care providers and early childhood educators.
- [Kidco HeadStart/Early HeadStart](#) - free child care and preschool funded by federal and state governments.

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