

# Employee Child Care Guide

## Child Care Tips and Resources



### Need Help Finding Child Care?



Visit: <https://idahostars.org/> or call the Idaho CareLine at 2-1-1 or 1-800-926-2588

**Child Care Resource Centers (CCRCs)** are located regionally statewide and are staffed by Quality Care Consultants, Resource Specialists, and Child Care Health Consultants.

CCRC staff can help parents find child care based on individual family needs (e.g., near work, near home, or to keep siblings together).

- Need help finding child care for a special needs child?
- Need help in finding child care during non-traditional hours (like evenings or weekends)?
- Looking for a Pre-K program, summer camp or, after-school program?

CCRC specialists can help. Staff work with families to understand their needs and desires, and to help parents make informed decisions. Let CCRC experts help you today!

### Are you taking advantage of federal and state tax credits to help make child care more affordable?

- There is a federal tax credit for child care expenses that allows a modest credit against individual/family taxes owed.
- There is a business employee benefit that enables employees to set-aside money for child care tax-free that can be used to reimburse some child care expenses.
- There is an Idaho child care tax deduction related to child care expenses that can be taken in addition to the federal child care tax credit.

To double check that you are taking advantage of tax incentives for child care affordability, check out our family tax summary information today.

### Need help affording the cost of child care?

For low-income families, child care subsidies are available based on family income. To find out more about the Idaho Child Care Program (ICCP) that helps low income families afford quality child care, check

out the [ICCP program](#) under Idaho's Department of Health and Welfare. Eligible families can earn up to about 130 percent of the federal poverty level and still potentially qualify for child care subsidies. In 2020 in Idaho, qualifying families with annual income up to \$21,996 for a family of two, \$27,744 for a family of three, \$33,480 for a family of four and \$39,240 for a family of five may be eligible for a subsidy to help make child care more affordable.

For more information about the ICCP program:

<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Children/ChildCareAssistance/tabid/292/Default.aspx>

To apply for child care subsidies:

<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/FoodCashAssistance/ApplyforAssistance/tabid/1554/Default.aspx>

### **The IdahoSTARS Steps to Quality program is voluntary for child care providers. What is it? How does it work? Why should parents look for quality rated programs?**

It's hard for parents to compare child care settings and to know the differences among settings. Parents want their children to be safe. Parents also want settings that will promote the healthy development of their children.

Steps to Quality is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early education and school-age care programs. Throughout Idaho, it is an effort to take the guesswork for parents out of choosing child care. QualitySTARS assigns a quality rating to early education and school-age care programs that meet a set of defined program standards. The system is voluntary for child care providers. However, the rating system approach is helpful to programs for continuous quality improvement and helpful to parents in providing a quality guide to choosing child care.

**Why should parents look for programs that participate in the Steps to Quality program?** Research has found that the quality of care children receive in their child care settings dramatically affects their social, emotional, physical, and cognitive development. Research has also shown, even into the teen years, that high quality settings during the early years of life, have made a difference in social and emotional development and school performance (in both the short-term and the long-term).

For more on the IdahoSTARS Steps to Quality program, see <https://idahostars.org/Parents/Choosing-Quality-Child-Care/STQ-Regions>.

#### **Parent Tips:**

[Tips on finding child care – it's as easy as 1, 2, 3! \(Look, Check for, Ask!\)](#):

[IdahoSTARS Child Care Checklist](#)

[Questions? Call your Child Care Resource Center Specialist!](#)