

Child Care Information Guide

Jefferson-Lewis Childcare Project

"Every Child, Quality Care"



A program of

COMMUNITY ACTION PLANNING COUNCIL

Child Care Resource & Referral

Choosing child care is one of the most important decisions families make. The quality of child care has a direct impact on your child's ability to learn, to build healthy relationships and to become the best he or she can be. Local Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) organizations, like the Jefferson-Lewis Childcare Project, help parents in choosing quality care by providing referrals to local child care programs, by offering information on state licensing requirements and information on the availability of child care subsidies.

New York Child Care Regulations

- An individual caring for 2 or more children for over 3 hours per day must be registered through the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)
- The Office performs a criminal history record check regarding any owner, employee, caregiver or volunteer of a child day care center, small day care center, school-age child care program, group family day care home, or family day care home, and any person age eighteen or over residing in the home of a group family day care home or family day care home.
- Family Day Care, Group Family Day Care, Centers and most SACC programs are required to License or Register through the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). All of these programs are regulated, monitored and inspected by OCFS. Having a license or registration does not guarantee quality. JLCP does not recommend or guarantee the quality of any program. We encourage parents to visit and interview each program before making that final decision. For complete information on NYS Day Care Regulations, visit www.ocfs.state.ny.us or contact the Regional Office at (315) 423-1202.

Types of Child Care

There are many types of child care options in New York State. Quality child care is very important in that it provides care in a safe, warm and friendly setting. There is not one type of program that is necessarily better than another type of program. You, as the parent, are the best judge for which type of program will best meet your family's needs.

Click the link to watch a short video to learn more about your child care options:

[Child Care Options Video](#)

Family Day Care Homes (FDC)

- May provide care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years and operate for more than 3 hours per day
- Must have one adult present for every two children under the age of 24 months
- The provider must meet state regulations and be registered through the Office of Children and Family Services
- It is often a more family-like atmosphere.

The maximum child-to-adult ratios are as follows:

Child's Age	Ratio (# of children per caregiver)
0 - 2 years	2
2 - 5 years	4
5 - 12 years	2

Group Family Day Care Homes (GFDC)

- May provide care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years and operate for more than 3 hours per day
- Must have one adult present for every two children under the age of 24 months
- The maximum allowable number of children will depend on how many infants are in care
- The provider will have an assistant when more than six children are present
- They are Licensed by OCFS

The maximum child-to-adult ratios are as follows:

Child's Age	Ratio (# of children per 2 caregivers)
0 - 2 years	4
2 - 5 years	8
5 - 12 years	4

The average cost of care for FDC and GFDC in Jefferson and Lewis Counties is as follows:

	Birth – 18 mo.	18 mo. – 2 yrs.	3 yrs. – 5 yrs.	6 yrs. – 12 yrs.
Weekly	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$150.00	\$143.00
Daily	33.00	30.00	30.00	30.00
Part-day	22.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Hourly	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00

If Family Child Care is a new concept to you, we recommend watching this video to learn more

[Family-Based Child Care Video](#)

Child Care Centers

- Provide care for more than 6 children at a time in a facility that is not a personal residence
- May provide care for children ages 6 weeks through 12 years and operate more than 3 hours per day
- Children are typically separated in different classrooms by age
- They are Licensed by OCFS

The maximum child-to-adult ratios are as follows:

Child's Age	Group Size	Ratio (# of children per caregiver)
0-6 weeks	6	3
6 weeks - 18 months	8	4
18 months - 36 months	12	5
3 years	18	7
4 years	21	8
5 years	24	9
6 - 9 years	20	10
10 - 12 years	30	15

The average cost of care for Centers in Jefferson and Lewis Counties is as follows:

	Birth – 18 mo.	18 mo. – 2 yrs.	3 yrs. – 5 yrs.	6 yrs. – 12 yrs.
Weekly	\$200.00	\$190.00	\$180.00	\$170.00
Daily	43.00	41.00	38.00	37.00
Part-day	29.00	27.00	25.00	25.00
Hourly	7.00	7.50	7.50	7.00

*For FDC, GFDC and Centers, all staff members are required to be fingerprinted for a background clearance check and take a minimum of 30 hours of appropriate training every 2 years. All of these programs are inspected by a state representative regularly.

School Age Child Care Programs (SACC)

- Provide care for more than 6 children from kindergarten through age 12 during the school year before and/or after regular school hours
- Care may be provided during school vacations and holidays
- If they are open more than 3 hours per day, they are Registered by OCFS

The maximum child-to-adult ratio are as follows:

Child's Age	Group Size	Ratio (# of children per caregiver)
K – 9 years	20	10
10 – 12 years	30	15

The average cost of care for SACC programs in Jefferson and Lewis Counties is as follows:

	6 yrs. – 12 yrs.
Weekly	\$180.00
Daily	38.00
Part-day	25.00
Hourly	7.50

Other Types of Child Care

Legally Exempt/Informal Day Care

- Provide care for up to 2 non-related children and/or 6 relatives
- Provider's own children do not count in the total number of children allowed
- Provider is hired by the child's parents
- Not regulated by OCFS

Nursery School/Preschool Programs

- Serve children ages 2-5 years of age in a variety of settings
- Class may meet anywhere between 1-5 days per week for less than 3 hours per class and follow the school year calendar
- They may volunteer to be Licensed by OCFS

Head Start Programs

- A federally funded program that provides services for preschool-aged children from income eligible families
- Usually Licensed as Day Care Centers
- For more information contact:
 - Jefferson County- CAPC of Jefferson County at (315)782-4900
 - Lewis County- Lewis County Head Start at (315)376-7531

Financial Assistance Options

Child Care Subsidy

Income eligible families may be able to receive help paying for child care while they are working and/or attending school. Contact your local Department of Social Services (DSS) for more information:

Jefferson County DSS- (315)782-5024
Lewis County DSS- (315)376-5562

Family Size	200% of Poverty Level Annual Income
2	\$ 29,637
3	\$ 37,296
4	\$ 44,955
5	\$ 52,614
6	\$ 60,273
7	\$ 67,951
8	\$ 75,647

(for each additional member, add \$7, 696)

Multi Child Discounts

Some programs offer fee discounts to parents with more than one child in their program. The discount will vary with each program, however, most programs offering a multi child discount will charge full rate for one child and a reduced rate for the additional child/children.

Earned Income Tax Credit

The Federal and NYS Earned Income Tax Credits are tax credits you claim based on the money you earn on your job. The amounts will vary depending on your marital status, your family's earned income and the number of qualified children. More information is available at www.irs.gov/eitc or call

1-800-TAX-1040.

Additional tax credit information is available at ww.nwlc.org./loweryourtaxes.

*You may also visit www.mybenefits.ny.gov to check your eligibility for a wide range of work supports.

Here is a video that breaks down the financial options for child care

[Child Care Payment Video](#)

Quality Indicators

High-quality child care will offer your child a stimulating, nurturing environment which should help prepare them for school and to reach his or her full potential. High-quality child care programs provide an atmosphere in which your child will be able to thrive cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically.

The following indicators are important to think about when looking for high quality care:

Parent Involvement: As a parent, you are the key to quality childcare. You have a right to drop in at any time during regular business hours to observe the program or to see your child. Providers should talk to the parents about the child's activities each day and let the parent know how the child's day went. If you have questions or concerns talk to your provider, communication between the parent and the childcare provider is very important

Family Involvement: Caregivers should communicate each day with families, welcome parents into their childcare setting or classroom, and organize special events that include the child's family members (example: field trips, special activities, etc.). The provider should incorporate practices that reflect the values and beliefs of the families and the cultures in their communities.

Child-Adult Ratio: Regulated programs must limit the number of children each adult cares for based on standards set in regulations. These standards help to ensure children are properly supervised and get all the attention they need.

Training & Experience: Regulated childcare providers must have prior experience caring for children and must receive ongoing training in areas such as safety, nutrition, responsive caregiving, curriculum and child abuse prevention.

Turnover: It is best if children stay with the same caregiver for at least a year. Getting used to new caregivers takes time and can be difficult for some children, so it is wise to choose a center which has minimal staff turnover.

Regulation & Oversight: Any program that cares for more than 2 children, 3 hours or more per day, must be licensed or registered by the State Office of Children and Family Services. When you visit a regulated childcare facility, you have the right to ask to see their registration or license certificate.

Inspections: Every licensed childcare program must be inspected before each license renewal. Providers also have monitoring inspections as well as Child and Adult Food Program inspections.

Appropriate Health & Safety Practices: New York State ensures that the basic health and safety requirements are met by licensing childcare centers and registering family day care home. New York standards are among the highest in the nation, addressing everything from hand washing procedures and sanitation to policies on administering medications.

- ❑ Children are supervised by the caregiver and can be seen and heard at all times, even at naptime.
- ❑ The program is childproofed to prevent accidents:
 - Poisonous and dangerous materials, like medicines and cleaning solutions, are stored out of the reach of children
 - Electrical sockets are covered
 - There are childproof locks on cabinets
 - Hanging cords from blinds are secured
 - Small household objects that may be a hazard are out of reach
 - There are safety gates on stairs
- ❑ Preventing accidents
 - There is fencing to keep children away from pools, ponds, and other bodies of water
- ❑ Handling emergencies
 - The provider has a plan to handle fire or medical emergencies
 - The caregiver has a working phone and the proper phone numbers in case of emergency
 - The caregiver has a fully stocked first aid kit
 - There are smoke detectors on each floor and fire extinguishers in the childcare area
 - Caregiver should practice emergency escape fire drills with children once a month

Plan for Child Care Search

1. Call potential provider
 - Ask if they have openings
 - If your child requires special accommodations (i.e. nut free, pet free, accessible entrances, etc.), verify those with the provider.
 - Arrange appointments/interviews with providers you think may meet your needs
 - Prepare a list of questions to ask during your interview (see sample questions on next page)

2. Visit potential providers
 - Visit during the time children are present
 - Take your own child to meet and interact with the provider and the other children
 - Observe the room your child may be in for safety issues (such as outlet covers, bathroom routine and appearances, toys appropriate to age, supervision by staff or provider, staff to child ratio and group size)
 - Obtain a copy of the provider contract (if they have one)

3. After your visit
 - Check references of providers (perhaps parents who currently use their services and at least one parent who no longer uses their services)
 - Read through the provider contract carefully to make sure that it meets your needs
 - Call our registration staff (782-4900) to ask about any substantial complaints or licensing violations

Interview potential providers

Health and Safety

- Is there adequate space for quiet and active play both indoors and outdoors?
- Ask if all staff have been trained in CPR and First Aid
- Are nutritious meals and snacks served? Is there a weekly menu available?
- Are there safe areas for napping? (enough cribs for infants)
- Are there emergency contact cards for each child?

Policies

- Ask if there are regular times scheduled for parent-provider communication/conferences
- Ask to go over provider's contract (if they have one)
- Ask about holidays, vacations and sick days for you and the provider. Is there a late pick-up fee?
- How is discipline handled? (note: physical punishment is strictly prohibited in a licensed/registered facility)
- Ask how the provider will keep you informed about your child's day

Program

- Ask if there are any ways in which you can be involved in the program (such as field trips, volunteering to help with projects, etc.)
- Are there age appropriate activities for your child? What type of focus does the program have?

Professionalism

- Ask how long the provider has been caring for children
- Ask how often staff changes happen
- Does the caregiver continue to keep up-to-date by attending trainings?

If your child has a medical condition or needs to take medication while he/she is in care you should choose a MAT approved childcare provider. **Medication Administration Training (MAT)** is a training approved by NYS Office of Children and Family Services to train childcare providers to safely administer medications in their program. Successful completion of the training includes written tests and a demonstration of competency.

To obtain a profile of any licensed provider or to check a provider's violations, visit the Office of Children and Family Services website at www.ocfs.state.ny.us Or contact the Syracuse Regional Office at (315)423-1202.

Community Resources

You may access the following websites for a complete listing of services within each county:

Jefferson County- www.co.jefferson.ny.us

Lewis County- www.lewiscountyny.org

American Red Cross of NNY	782-4410
Child Abuse Reporting	1(800)342-3720
Community Action Planning Council	782-4900
Cornell Cooperative Extension (Watertown)	788-8450
(Lowville)	376-5270
Dental Clinic	376-4500
Domestic Violence	1(800)942-6906
Family Court	785-3001
Family Counseling Services of NNY	782-4483
Jefferson County DSS	782-9030
Jefferson Co. Sheriff's Dept.	788-1441
Lewis County DSS	376-5400
Lewis County Opportunities	376-8202
Lewis Co. Sheriff's Dept.	376-3511
NC Prenatal/Perinatal	782-8533
North County Children's Clinic (WIC/Dental)	782-9450
Northern Regional Center for Independent Living	785-8703
Planned Parenthood	782-1818
Poison Control Center	1(800)222-1222
Public Health	(Watertown)786-3770
(Lowville)	376-5453
Urban Mission	782-8440
Victims Assistance Center	782-1855
WIC	376-6427

Other Resources:

** Subscribe to the monthly Jefferson-Lewis Childcare Project Parent Newsletter <http://eepurl.com/bf6LB9>

**You may also subscribe to the Daily Parent at www.childcareaware.org

**Visit the Early Care & Learning Council at www.earlycareandlearning.org and sign up for the Parent Network: News & Action Center

**National Association for Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies (NACCRRA) www.naccrra.org

Jefferson-Lewis Childcare Project Child Care Resource & Referral Policies

Referral Fee Policy

The Jefferson-Lewis Childcare Project has a planned system for implementing referrals in order for families to find quality child care. There are no fees associated with the referral procedure.

Confidentiality Policy

JLCP staff will adhere to confidentiality. All information given to create appropriate referrals will be kept confidential. The information will only be used to help our staff locate potential providers, identify other resources that may be helpful to clients, and provides statistical information to our agency and our funding sources.

Disclaimer Policy

Any provider's names that are given to callers by JLCP are referrals only. We do not recommend or guarantee the quality of any program listed in our database. We encourage you to visit and interview each provider before making a final decision.

Complaint Policy

JLCP promotes and supports quality care. One important way to support high quality care is to have a policy regarding how to respond to complaints.

-If you have a complaint against a JLCP staff member, you may submit your complaint in writing to the JLCP Director, 518 Davidson St., Watertown, NY 13601

-If you have a complaint against a child care program you should contact our Registration Department at (315)782-4900 or 1-800-287-8904

Commitment to Diversity

Our services are available to individuals without regard to race, gender, color, religion, ancestry, age, or disability. We are committed to providing services to children and families whose needs are the most difficult to meet. These include families with low and moderate incomes, families that live in neighborhoods where child care and early education services are difficult to access or in short supply, and families that have children with special needs.

If you have any questions regarding JLCP's policies, please contact the Director at (315)782-4900