



Early Childhood Resource Guide for Educators

**NC
InCK**

**NC INTEGRATED
CARE FOR KIDS**

in partnership with
The ABC Science Collaborative

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The comprehensive Early Childhood Guide was developed by [NC Integrated Care For Kids](#) (NC InCK) and this resource was developed by [The ABC Science Collaborative](#) as a tool for school social workers and other educators working with students and families with children in early childhood.

For additional resources and information, please see the full [Early Childhood Guide](#) on the NC InCK website.

What are Local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies and what do they do?

Local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies help families find child care by providing:

- Referrals to local child care providers
- Information on state licensing requirements
- Information on where to get help paying for child care

CCR&Rs can help by phone, in person, and in other ways tailored to each family. Most CCR&Rs have websites with child care information and resources. Many also have search tools that allow families to find child care referrals on their own time.

Use this [search tool](#) to find your local CCR&R agency.

What programs provide financial support for paying for child care?

There are programs that provide financial support to families for child care. The list below is adapted from the [Child Care Services Association](#), which provides online resources for finding, evaluating and paying for child care. CCSA supports nine North Carolina counties, including Alamance, Caswell, Durham, Franklin, Granville, Orange, Person, Vance and Wake counties.

- [Child care subsidy program](#): This program provides families with information and resources to find affordable, quality child care. Funds are administered by each county's Department of Social Services (DSS). Families can apply through their county DSS. Counties often have a waitlist, but families should apply and confirm contact information is correct if they've already applied.
- [Tax credits](#): Families who have child care expenses and pay income taxes may be eligible to receive assistance through federal and state tax credits.
- [Child Care Services Association \(CCSA\) Scholarship Program](#): Several child care scholarships from CCSA are available for families in Durham and Orange counties as well as families affiliated with UNC-Chapel Hill.
- Other scholarship and financial aid programs: Even if they don't have formal programs, some child care facilities offer financial assistance and scholarships. Families are encouraged to ask about their assistance options.

For questions about paying for child care, call Child Care Referral Central at 1-855-327-5933.



What are the types of child care?



Center-based child care

Center-based child care programs operate with a similar structure to kindergarten classrooms, making them a good transition to the public school system. Center-based child care often uses organized programs, a curriculum, and opportunities for children to socialize with their peers.



Family child care homes (FCC)

Family child care homes (FCC) provide child care in a residential setting. Families looking for an environment less like traditional school and with fewer children enrolled may find FCCs to be a good fit.



In-home care (babysitter/nanny)

Families can have someone come to their home to care for their child. There are no scholarships or subsidies available for in-home babysitters or nannies; this option requires the family to pay a babysitter or nanny directly.

[Learn more](#) about the types of child care and child care environments.

What about support for early childhood mental and behavioral health?

Many children from birth to age 6 may benefit from early childhood mental health services. Addressing behavioral, emotional, and social challenges early is important because it reduces the risk of mental health struggles later in life.

If a family or caretaker identifies a need for behavioral health support, best next steps are:

- Formal evaluation with a primary care provider or behavioral health provider is an important step.
- Families should talk with their pediatrician or family doctor. They can refer children to evidence-based therapies and therapists who have experience with young children. Options include, but are not limited to, parent-child interaction therapy, child-parent psychotherapy, and child-parent relationship therapy. [NCchildtreatmentprogram.org](https://www.ncchildtreatmentprogram.org) has a provider search tool.
- Families can also contact their local Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA). NC DHHS provides a [directory](#) of North Carolina CDSAs.

What is Smart Start and the North Carolina Partnership for Children?

[Smart Start](#) supports children ages 0 to 5 across North Carolina by improving early care education programs, providing parents with local tools and resources, and ensuring children have access to quality preventive health care. Smart Start funds and supports [Local Partnerships](#) across the state. Many early childhood programs are administered by Local Partnerships. If a school social worker or educator is unsure how to support a child, [calling their appropriate Local Partnership](#) can be a start.



For more early childhood information and resources, view NCInCK's complete [Early Childhood Guide](#).