



Let's Talk About CHILD CARE



for Foster Parents

As a working foster parent, you are responsible for securing child care services for your foster child. You will need to identify, research and visit child care programs before you are approved as a foster parent. Your foster care specialist can help answer questions and help you choose what type of child care may be right for you.

Helpful Resources:

1. Child Care Subsidy

Oklahoma Human Services may help pay child care costs for foster parents who are working or attending a formal education or training program. To receive child care subsidy payments, you must choose a licensed child care provider that accepts child care subsidy from Oklahoma Human Services. Subsidy payments are based on a child care provider's quality rating (1 to 5 Stars).

Find Licensed Child Care Providers

- Child Care Locator on the Oklahoma Human Services website (<https://childcarefind.okdhs.org>)
- Statewide Child Care Referral Center (English language): **1-800-438-0008**
- Statewide Child Care Referral Center (Spanish language): **405-525-8783**
- Note: Additional child care facility fees may apply.

You may also choose an in-home child care provider who is related to the foster child. The provider must be at least 18 years old and cannot live in the child's household. (340:40-13-2 Approving In-home Child Care).

2. Head Start

This federally funded program is available at no cost for foster children from birth to age five. Head Start provides a learning environment for children that includes health care, meals and playtime. To find **Head Start programs** in your area, please visit <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/center-locator>. Type in the city name and zip code. A map will appear on your screen showing Head Start programs in that area. Click on the program to find more detailed information including hours of operation. You can also visit the **Oklahoma Association of Community Action Agencies** website at <https://okcaa.org/head-start-agencies> and click on a map to choose Head Start programs in each county.



3. Oklahoma Foster Care Voucher Program

The Oklahoma Foster Care Voucher Program is available to kinship and traditional foster families approved through Oklahoma Human Services or a tribe. Vouchers are used to reimburse an individual identified by the foster parent who provides care for the foster child in order to give the foster parents a break (or respite) from caregiving. Vouchers cannot be used by foster parents to place foster children with another foster family. To learn more about the voucher program, contact your foster care specialist. Families approved through Resource Family Partnership agencies, should contact their specific agency regarding respite options.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Child care may not be immediately available for your foster child so please have a temporary plan in place until all required paperwork, approvals and authorizations are complete.

Have “backup” babysitters who can step in at moment’s notice. You will need a variety of friends, family and neighbors to help support you in different situations. What conversations have you had with your identified “backups?” Are they able to step in at a moment’s notice?

Common scenarios when child care may be needed. Think about who can provide last-minute child care for your foster child and keep adding names to your list.

Situations needing Child Care:

- Child gets sick at school and needs to be picked up immediately, but you can’t leave work.
- Child was involved in a fight at school and is suspended for three days.
- A foster child was placed in your home the previous night, and you must be at work at 8 a.m.
- Child needs to be picked up from child care by 6 p.m. but you have to work late.
- Child is in the hospital and you are with them. You also foster the child’s sibling. Who will care for the sibling while you are at the hospital?
- You have a family emergency and must travel out of state for three days.
- Do you or your spouse work non-traditional hours? Who cares for your foster child during those hours?
- Your foster child is out of school for holiday breaks, but you have to go to work.

