

## Child Care Check Frequently Asked Questions

(Revised 10/22/2015)

### Contents

What is Child Care Check?.....	2
What are the different types of licensed child care? .....	2
What is ECEAP? .....	2
What are Head Start and Early Head Start? .....	2
Is this the best way to look for child care facilities in my area?.....	2
What if I have questions about a provider in Child Care Check? .....	3
What is the difference between an initial, non-expiring, or probationary license? .....	3
Do all child care providers in Washington need a license? .....	3
Why can't I find a provider on Child Care Check who told me she was licensed? .....	3
What does it mean if the provider I looked up is labeled as "not licensed by DEL but has been determined to have offered unlicensed care?" .....	4
I see one provider has two complaints. Another has three. What does that mean? .....	4
I looked up a provider and the provider was listed as No Referral. What does that mean?.....	4
I just looked up a provider who had a complaint type as "Unknown" and another that said "WAC covers multiple complaint issues." What does this mean? .....	4
This provider's complaint says it was self-referred. What does that mean? .....	5
What are suspension and revocation?.....	5
Can I use Child Care Check to make a complaint about a facility or to report suspected child abuse or neglect?5	
Can I use Child Care Check to make a public records request?.....	5
Child Care Check contact information.....	5

## What is Child Care Check?

Child Care Check is a way for parents, families and others to get information about individual child care and early learning programs in Washington. The information is collected by the Department of Early Learning (DEL), which licenses child care providers and facilities. Child Care Check includes:

- Licensed Child Care, ECEAP, and Head Start programs
- How long the provider has been licensed
- How many children and the age ranges of the children the provider may care for
- Current licensing status (i.e., non-expiring license, initial license, probationary license)
- The name and contact information for the licensor
- Information on valid complaint findings within the last six years
- Background check status for the most recent three years
- Routine licensing inspections and resulting compliance agreements as of July 1, 2011
- Closed providers, whether suspended, revoked, etc.
- Certified child care providers, which are providers who are exempt from being licensed but wish to show they meet state licensing requirements
- Number of slots for ECEAP and Head Start programs
- Whether the provider participates in Early Achievers, Washington's quality rating and improvement system. Read more about Early Achievers at [www.del.wa.gov/care/qris](http://www.del.wa.gov/care/qris)
- The provider's Early Achievers rating and what that rating means
- When available, a personalized statement, provided by an Early Achievers provider, highlighting unique qualities of their program

## What are the different types of licensed child care?

- A family home child care provider is licensed to provide direct care, supervision and early learning opportunities in the provider's home for children who have not yet reached 13 years of age.
- A child care center is a facility licensed to provide regularly scheduled care for a group of children ages 1 month through 12 years for periods of less than 24 hours.
- A school-age child care program operates in a facility other than a private residence and cares for school-age children ages 5 years through 12 years when school is not in session.

## What is ECEAP?

ECEAP is Washington State's prekindergarten program for 3 and 4 year olds, administered by Department of Early Learning (DEL). It provides comprehensive services including health, education and family support. The goals of ECEAP are to:

- Achieve kindergarten readiness, including academic, social and health goals.
- Foster families' engagement in their children's learning experiences.
- Strengthen families' resilience and support self-sufficiency goals.

## What are Head Start and Early Head Start?

Head Start and Early Head Start are administered by the federal government. They include both home and center based programs which provide services to children and families prenatal through preschool. They provide comprehensive services including health, education and family support.

## Is this the best way to look for child care facilities in my area?

Child Care Check is one tool to help in the search for quality child care. DEL recommends the following steps:

1. Contact [Child Care Aware of Washington](#) for a list of licensed providers that match your needs, which may include location, hours, rates or types of care.

2. Review DEL's [A Guide to Finding Quality Child Care](#) to learn about the benefits of licensed child care and get tips on what to look for when you visit a facility.
3. Once you have a list of providers who may meet your family's needs, use Child Care Check to review their licensing status, history and valid complaints.

## What if I have questions about a provider in Child Care Check?

If you have questions, you can email [check@del.wa.gov](mailto:check@del.wa.gov) or call DEL at 1.866.48.CHECK (1.866.482.4325) and choose option 3.

Whenever possible, please include any of the following:

- Your name and contact information
- Provider ID, if known
- Physical address, including zip code
- The name of the provider, especially last name and unusual spellings
- Provider phone number

This information makes it easier for us to research the provider before responding to you. If you don't have the above information, you can contact us and we will use the information you do know and see if we can find the right provider.

## What is the difference between an initial, non-expiring, or probationary license?

- An **initial license** is a six-month license that allows a provider to offer care while DEL determines if the provider meets state licensing rules. A provider may have up to four six-month initial licenses if progress is being made.
- A **non-expiring license** may be issued when DEL determines a provider meets state licensing rules. A non-expiring license becomes non-expiring as long as the provider works with DEL to following the licensing rules and requirements.
- A **probationary license** may be issued to providers who are not meeting state licensing rules or who have had many complaints or concerns come up about the care they offer. DEL will only issue this kind of license when we are sure the health or safety of children is not at risk and we have reason to believe the provider will improve. DEL licensors work with the provider to create a compliance plan to meet state licensing rules. A probationary license may be issued for up to six months if there is continued improvement. It can be extended for six more months as part of the improvement plan.

## Do all child care providers in Washington need a license?

No, certain types of care do not need a license, including:

- Nannies who provide care in a family's home
- Informal parent cooperatives
- Play groups
- Programs that are engaged primarily in early childhood education with preschool children and in which no child is enrolled on a regular basis for more than four hours per day
- Parks and recreation programs
- Family, friends and neighbors who provide occasional care

## Why can't I find a provider on Child Care Check who told me she was licensed?

For many family home child care providers, the license is only under the provider's name, and not the name of the business. Here are some tips for finding providers who are not coming up:

- Try entering only the last name of the provider.
- Enter the provider's phone number.
- Select the provider's county before you search.

Providers may give their business name – if they have one – to their licensor, who can then update our system to reflect that.

It is possible the provider isn't licensed. If you still can't find the provider, call us at 1.866.48.CHECK (1.866.482.4325) and choose option 3.

## **What does it mean if the provider I looked up is labeled as “not licensed by DEL but has been determined to have offered unlicensed care?”**

This means:

- The provider is not licensed.
- DEL inspected the facility and determined the provider was operating without a license.
- DEL cited the provider for unlicensed care.

Providing unlicensed care is a misdemeanor in Washington. If you know a provider is offering unlicensed care, please call **1.866.END.HARM (1.866.363.4276)**.

## **I see one provider has two complaints. Another has three. What does that mean?**

Reviewing a provider's complaint history is important; however, complaints don't necessarily tell the entire story of a provider's ability to offer quality care for your child. In addition to complaints, Child Care Check shows providers' licensing inspections and compliance agreements as of July 1, 2011. Those documents help paint a more detailed picture.

For a list of items to consider when choosing child care, read DEL's [Guide to Finding Quality Child Care](#).

## **I looked up a provider and the provider was listed as No Referral. What does that mean?**

This means one of three things:

- This provider is currently not accepting new clients who receive child care subsidies.
- The provider has voluntarily agreed not to accept new children.
- The provider is suspended due to licensing actions or other serious situation.

DEL determines a child care provider may not accept new clients who receive child care subsidies when:

- The license has been summarily suspended.
- DEL has suspended and moved to revoke the license (see below for more information on suspension and revocation).
- The provider has agreed to terms of a probationary license (see below for more information on probationary licenses).
- A Licensing Critical Incident Report has been filed.

## **I just looked up a provider who had a complaint type as "Unknown" and another that said "WAC covers multiple complaint issues." What does this mean?**

**Unknown:** Some complaint types have a defined category. For example, if a provider neglected to adequately watch children, it might fall under the category of “supervision.” If a child was hurt but the

provider didn't report the incident; it could fall under the category of "failure to report." However, when the category is unclear it is listed as unknown.

**Multiple complaint issues:** Some portions of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC)--the rules that govern child care facilities--have categories that display as "multiple complaint issues."

You may contact DEL for details about complaint types.

### **This provider's complaint says it was self-referred. What does that mean?**

It means the provider reported the complaint to DEL.

- Center employees must follow [WAC 170-295-7060](#).
- School-age facilities must follow [WAC 170-297-2250](#).
- Family home providers must follow [WAC 170-296A-2250](#).

### **What are suspension and revocation?**

In short:

- Suspension means the department has taken actions against the child care license which no longer allows the provider to operate licensed child care.
- Revocation means the provider may no longer offer licensed child care. The department found that the conditions of the licensed facility constituted reasonable cause to believe there is imminent risk of harm to a child or children.

For more information, please read [DEL's publication about revocation and suspension](#).

### **Can I use Child Care Check to make a complaint about a facility or to report suspected child abuse or neglect?**

To make a complaint about a licensed facility or to report suspected child abuse or neglect in a child care setting, please call **1.866.END.HARM (1.866.363.4276)**.

### **Can I use Child Care Check to make a public records request?**

Child Care Check is not intended as a tool to make public records requests. If you are seeking more detailed information about a licensed provider, click here to [learn about making a public records request](#) or email [public.records@del.wa.gov](mailto:public.records@del.wa.gov).

### **Child Care Check contact information**

**Web address:** <https://apps.del.wa.gov/check/CheckSearch.aspx>

**Email:** [check@del.wa.gov](mailto:check@del.wa.gov)

**Phone:** 1.866.48.CHECK (1.866.482.4325), option 3