

Quality Child Care Makes a Difference



No one can replace the loving care from a parent or caregiver. Unfortunately, you can't always be there. That's why quality child care outside the home is so important—especially in the first five years of a child's life. This is a critical time in a child's development. Quality care offers kids a safe, stimulating environment to nurture that development and help them reach their full potential.

What does quality child care mean?

Quality child care might mean something different to everyone. After all, every family has their own needs. For DCF, quality starts with regulated child care. This helps ensure that providers are meeting the minimum health and safety standards. Beyond regulation, there are other signs of quality care that parents and caregivers can look for:

- Well-trained staff educated in child development
- Legal staff-to-child ratios
- A safe, healthy space for children to learn, play, and develop
- Strong family involvement
- Opportunities for hands-on learning
- Children's development is tracked/monitored to help them learn and reach milestones



Why does quality child care matter?

Quality child care has the potential to leave a lasting positive impact on children, parents, and communities. Below are just a few examples of how.

Benefits for children

A lot happens in the first five years of a child's life. This is the period when their brains are growing most rapidly. Their experiences, positive or negative, help shape how their brain develops. That's why the care kids get is so important. It sets the stage for learning and success throughout life.

Here are a few ways quality care benefits children:

- Encourages healthy brain development
 - It promotes higher-level abilities like creativity, self-regulation, problem-solving, and communication
- Increases chances of success later in life
 - Kids who experience quality care programs are 25% more likely to graduate high school
- Promotes healthy social behavior
 - Kids who learn through play stimulate brain development that helps build social skills such as peer interactions, empathy, resilience, self-soothing, and regulating



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Benefits for parents and caregivers

As a parent or caregiver, you will always be your child's best teacher, but quality care gives you a partner—a partner that allows you to succeed in other areas of your life. That helps build family strength!

Here are a few ways quality care benefits parents and caregivers:

- Provides peace of mind knowing your child is well cared for and safe
- Allows parents and caregivers to focus on opportunities for success and family growth
- Gives you the ability to work or go to school
- Provides the freedom to achieve career success and financial stability
- Provides another avenue for involvement in your child's growth and learning
- Offers new opportunities for parents and caregivers to connect with their kids

Benefits for communities

The benefits of quality child care reach more than parents and kids. Communities benefit, too—in more ways than you might think. Here are a few:

- Better economy through job opportunities and a larger workforce
- Early positive experiences reduce the likelihood of committing crimes later in life
- Less strain on financial assistance programs
- Quality, affordable child care lets parents and caregivers enter the workforce, which can eliminate the need for public assistance
- Children enrolled in quality early care and education are more prepared for school and end up with higher income levels later in life



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Learn more about quality child care at dcf.wisconsin.gov.

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families is your trusted source for child care information, resources, and support!

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