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Children’s first five years lay the foundation for the rest of their lives. These early years have a major impact on how children succeed in kindergarten, in school, and in their lives.

Choosing child care and early education for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make. You will consider the cost, convenience and location of a program, but will you consider the most important factor – quality? Your child deserves to be in a quality environment that engages with families, is sensitive to each child’s individual skills and culture, and promotes a love of learning.

Maryland EXCELS helps families find high quality child care and early learning programs that fit theirs and their children’s needs.

Maryland EXCELS is here to help!

FIND A PROGRAM THAT MATCHES YOUR UNIQUE NEEDS.

You or your child may have specific needs or requirements that are important to you when selecting a program. Maryland EXCELS identifies programs that have met additional requirements in these areas:

- Asthma-Friendly Child Care
- Health and Wellness
- Eco-Friendly Program
- Cultural and Linguistic Competency
- Quality Business Practices

Use the Find A Program feature on MarylandEXCELS.org or the mobile app to locate programs with these specializations.

QUALITY MATTERS!

Visit www.marylandexcels.org today!

A PARENT’S GUIDE TO Quality Child Care

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS

Maryland EXCELS helps families find high quality child care and early learning programs that fit theirs and their children’s needs.
What does high quality look like?

- Program staff and educators are responsive to the needs of each individual child;
- Interactions between staff, children, and families are warm, positive and respectful;
- Learning opportunities and materials are developmentally appropriate, plentiful, and interactive;
- Teachers consider the strengths, interests, needs and cultural background of each child when planning activities;
- Health, safety, positive relationships, and learning are priorities of the program; and
- Families are welcome and encouraged to be engaged in all aspects of the program.

What is Maryland EXCELS?

Maryland EXCELS is a quality rating and improvement system for child care and early education programs that meet nationally recognized quality standards.

The MarylandEXCELS.org website and mobile app help families identify child care and early education programs that have attained one of five quality levels. By choosing a Maryland EXCELS participating program, families know that the program is committed to quality and continuous improvement by meeting standards that exceed the state's licensing requirements.

Maryland EXCELS rates the quality of child care and early learning programs on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest rating. Programs demonstrate their competence in these areas: Staffing and Professional Development, Accreditation and Program Improvement, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, and Administrative Policies and Practices. Programs with ratings 1 through 4 are meeting standards above the minimum licensing requirements and are committed to improving the quality of the services they provide to children and families.

Level Five programs meet the highest benchmarks in the Maryland EXCELS system and are state or nationally accredited.

YOUR CHILD DESERVES THE BEST, BECAUSE QUALITY MATTERS!

Do You Use a Child Care Subsidy Voucher?

If you are eligible for a Child Care Subsidy voucher to assist with the cost of child care, you must choose a Maryland EXCELS participating program.

www.marylandexcels.org

Where do I start?

FIND A HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM FOR YOUR CHILD.

- Ensure that the program is licensed or registered by using CheckCCMD.org to review their licensing inspection history.
- Search for Maryland EXCELS quality rated programs by using the Maryland EXCELS mobile app and the MarylandEXCELS.org website.
- Select Find A Program and search by zip code, type of program, or your child’s individual needs, such as searching for Asthma-Friendly programs.
- Visit Maryland Family Network’s LOCATE Child Care site at MarylandFamilyNetwork.org or call them toll-free at 877-261-0060.
- Contact the program and arrange a visit to determine if the program is right for you and your child.
- Ask the child care or early education program about Maryland EXCELS and how they help children enter school ready to succeed.