



Find the Right Early Childhood or School-Age Program for Your Child

Quality Matters Because Your Child Deserves the Best!

A Parent's Guide to Quality Care

What is Maryland EXCELS?

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

Maryland EXCELS rates the quality of child care and early education programs on a scale of 1 to 5. Quality rated programs demonstrate competence in the following areas:

- Staffing and Professional Development Accreditation and Program Improvement
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Compliance with Child Care Licensing Regulations
- Administrative Policies and Practices

Programs with a quality rating of 5 meet the highest standards in Maryland EXCELS and are state or nationally accredited.

Why does quality matter?

You will consider cost, convenience and location of a program. But what about quality?

- Research shows that the first five years of a child's life build an important foundation for how children succeed in school and life.
- Your child deserves to be in an environment that engages with your family, is sensitive to your child's needs and promotes your child's love of learning.
- Choosing child care and early education for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make.

Where do you start?

Here are ways to find a high-quality program for your child in Maryland:

- Find Maryland EXCELS quality-rated programs with the help of the Find a Program tool on MarylandEXCELS.org.
- Visit MarylandFamilyNetwork.org/program-services/locate/ or call toll-free 877-261-0060.
- Once you find a quality program, contact the program and schedule a visit to determine if the program is right for you and your child.

Need help paying for child care? Visit Money4ChildCare.com

Find a Program to meet your unique needs

Do you or your child have specific needs or requirements? Maryland EXCELS recognizes programs that meet higher standards in the following areas:



For more information on how to choose a quality program, visit marylandexcels.org/choosing-quality and select **Tips for Finding Child Care** from the navigation menu.

How can you spot high-quality care?

- ✓ Staff are responsive to the needs of each child and family
- ✓ Interactions are warm, positive and respectful
- ✓ Learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate
- ✓ Activities and materials reflect children's strengths, interests and cultures
- ✓ Families are encouraged to engage in all aspects of the program

The Maryland EXCELS quality rating badges recognize and celebrate the hard work providers have put into becoming a Maryland EXCELS participant.



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