

Exploring Additional Child Care Options

When traditional care is difficult to find or isn't the right fit

Each family has its own set of unique needs and values, and it's important to find a child care arrangement that fits those needs. If you've had difficulty finding traditional child care programs that meet your needs or if traditional child care isn't the best fit for your family, you may want to consider some of the below ideas and alternative options –

Pursuing Traditional Child Care Options

Search in a different location

There may not be programs that fit your needs in the area where you live, but there could be options available near your work, school, etc.

Join waitlists

Join the waitlist at every program that could work for you in case an opening becomes available. Even if there are several families ahead of you on a waitlist, spots can unexpectedly open up and families ahead of you may find other alternatives in the meantime.



Child Care for Special Circumstances

Looking for crisis care options

If you're having a personal emergency and need someone to care for your child immediately, you may need to consider crisis care options. Locate your nearest crisis care facility- <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/child-care/help-for-families/crisis-help-for-families.htm>. You can also see if the 'Safe Families' program operates in your area- <https://safe-families.org/>. Safe Families support families in times of crisis by connecting them with community resources and host families.

Finding care for a child with special needs

For care for a child with special needs, behavioral concerns, or special considerations for child care, you can utilize Missouri's Inclusion Referral Service through United 4 Children. Contact United 4 Children at 1-800-467-2322 or begin on their website at <https://united4children.org/inclusion-services/>. You may also want to check eligibility for respite care or disability benefits for caregiving through your insurance or other community resources.

Alternative Child Care Options

Ask friends, family members, neighbors, or community organizations

Your personal support network can sometimes be the best source of assistance for your family. You may also want to check with your local library, church, or community center, as they may have information about who provides other sources of child care in your area.

Find babysitting and nanny services

If nanny or babysitting services would best fit your family's needs and preferences, here are some agencies you could explore –

[Nanny Lane](#)

[Jovie Nannies + Sitters](#)

[Care.com](#)

[Sittercity](#)

[Gateway Nanny Agency \(STL\)](#)

[TLC Family Care \(STL\)](#)

[STLSITTER \(STL\)](#)

[MK Nannies \(KC\)](#)

[Nannies of Kansas City \(KC\)](#)

Explore Exempt-from-Licensure Child Care and Early Learning Programs

There are child care and early learning options that are not required to be licensed or registered with the State and therefore are not typically included in our database of regulated child care programs. These options include:

- Early learning programs operated by the Public or Private School System,
- Programs that have achieved Montessori Accreditation,
- Summer Camps only,
- And caregivers who provide care to six or fewer children in their home.

Check with your local school district, local private schools, or ask around in the community to learn more about these options in your area.



If You Choose to use Unregulated Child Care

Some families find that the traditional child care options either aren't available when and where they need it, or just aren't the best fit for their family. If you choose to use another form of child care, it is important to consider a few extra factors.

Do your due diligence in assessing the safety of the program.

1. Ask lots of questions about staff training and education, the safety of the physical environment, ratio and group size, health and safety practices and policies, disciplinary practices, and their educational philosophy. Use this Questions to Ask document to get started.
2. Tour the space where your child will be cared. Pay attention to any safety hazards in the care environment, how the caregivers interact with the children present, and what activities and experiences are available to children. Use this Choosing Child Care Checklist as a guide for what to be on the lookout for.

Consider performing a background check on any informal caregiver, babysitter, or nanny.

Background checks can be done on any caregiver, neighbor, nanny, etc. by contacting Missouri's Family Care Safety Registry (FCSR). For more information about the FCSR, call 1-866-422-6872 or visit the website at <https://health.mo.gov/safety/fcsr/>.

Encourage informal providers to complete CPR/ First Aid certification.

Find CPR/ First Aid classes offered through the Red Cross or inquire with local agencies in your community.

