



## **Parent Handbook**



# **Region 5**

## **Serving Thirty-four Southeast Georgia Counties**

Operated by the Economic Development Division of



SAVANNAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE

# Child Care Choices



Choosing child care that is the best fit for you and for your children will take much time and thought. Your choice is an individual decision, which will reflect your values, your expectations, and your child's personal needs. Please use the following information to help you in your search.

## Things to Consider

- 1. Give yourself plenty of time to look.** Start looking as soon as you know you will need child care. The care your child receives from birth to age twelve will shape their future.
- 2. Make a list of practical considerations.** Consider hours of operation, location, and budget.
- 3. Increase your knowledge.** Review all materials provided in the consumer education packet. Focus on these points:
  - Licensing requirements
  - Information about complaints and licensing violations
  - Indicators contained in the Child Care Checklist

# Conducting Your Search

- 1. Telephone the Facilities to make initial contact.**
- 2. Visit the facility.** This first visit, try and go without your child, so you will be able to ask questions and observe without distraction. Be sure to spend time in the room where your child will be and talk to the staff that will be caring for your child.
- 3. Arrange to make a drop-in visit at a time when you can bring your child.** Spend enough time to see several activities. As you visit, the attached checklist will help you to evaluate the program

## Things to Know about Georgia's Child Care Rules & Regulations. . .

### Types of Facilities:

Georgia registers/licenses three types of facilities:

- Family Child Care Homes: provide care for up to six (6) children in a residence.
- Group Child Care Homes: provide care for 7-18 children in a residence in which a portion of the residence is designated solely for the child care business.
- Child Care Centers: provide care for 19 or more children in a commercial facility.

### ***FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN GEORGIA***

*In Georgia, financial assistance or childcare subsidies are handled through the Division of Family and Children's Services. For a contact number to your local county office, please call our Referral Specialist at 91.443.3384.*

## **Access to Registration/Licensing Rules and Regulations:**

- Visit: [www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)
- A copy of the rules and regulations can be viewed at the Early Start Child Care Resource & Referral Agency.

## **Access to Child Care Licensing Monitoring Reports:**

- A representative from the state's regulatory body randomly visits child care facilities to ensure that minimum state standards are met. Observations from these visits are compiled into a **Monitoring Report**. These reports are available for review at the website ([www.decal.ga.gov](http://www.decal.ga.gov)). Or can be viewed at the Early Start CCR&R office.

Please take the time to review the Monitoring Reports and address any concerns with the facilities staff.

## **Staffing Requirements:**

**Criminal Records Check:** No person having an unsatisfactory criminal record check may be an owner, director, or employee of a registered or licensed child care facility.

**Staff Training:** All owners, directors, or employees must complete a minimum of ten (10) clock hours of diverse training, which is related to care of children on an annual basis.

As of July 1, 2009, new Family Day Care Home applicants must possess one of the following:

- Child Development Associates (CDA) Credential
- Technical College Certificate (TCC) in Early Childhood Education
- Technical College Diploma (TCD) in Early Childhood Education
- Associates Degree in Early Childhood
- Paraprofessional Certificate

**Staff/Child Ratios** – This ratio determines the number of adults required to care for children in a specified age range.

**Family Child Care Home: 1:6**

- May care for two additional children who are three years and older for two designated one hour periods daily upon approval by the regulatory body.
- Assistant must be present if more than three children under the age of 12 months or more than six children under the age of three years are present.
- The maximum group size for a Family Child Care Home is 6 with the exception of the two children that may be in care for two designated one hour periods.

**Group Child Care Homes:**

- 1:6 - Infants less than one year old or children under 18 months who are not walking
- 1:8 - One year olds who are walking.
- 1:10 - Two-year olds
- 1:15 - Three -year olds
- 1:18 - Four-year olds
- 1:18 - Five-year olds
- 1:18 - Six years and older
- The maximum group size for a Group Child Care Home is 18.

To determine the staff:child ratios for mixed age groups use the following information:

- If children under the age of three are present, the age of the youngest child in the group shall determine the staff:child ratio.
- If all children in the group are three years old and older, the age of the majority of the children present shall determine the staff:child ratio.

**Child Care Centers:**

**Maximum Group Size**

- 1:6 - Birth to 18 months (not walking) -----12
- 1:8 – One-year olds who are walking -----16
- 1:10 – Two-year olds -----20
- 1:15 – Three-year olds -----30
- 1:18 – Four-year olds -----36
- 1:20 – Five-year olds -----40
- 1:25 – Six-year olds and older -----50

# CHILD CARE CHECKLIST

## **The Caregiver/Staff:**

- Genuinely respects and enjoys caring for children
- Talks to each child at the child's eye level
- Comforts the children when needed
- Offers and encourages the use of a variety of toys and activities
- Has training and experience in caring for young children (Ask to see training certificates.)
- Has a current CPR (Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation) and First Aid card (Ask to see it.)
- Has current registration/license posted
- Provides updates on your child's daily activities

## **The Program:**

- Meets minimum state standards for child/staff ratios (See child care choices handout)
- Provides adequate supervision at all times, including naptime
- Provides adequate staff to allow your child to receive individual attention
- Provides separate areas for resting, quiet play, and active play
- Provides activities appropriate for each age group
- Limits TV/video time
- Provides outdoor play on a daily basis

## **The Facility:**

- Offers nutritious meals and/or snacks
- Has menus posted or readily available
- Has a plan to control the spread of germs (diaper changing, meal preparation, handwashing, and naptime)
- Looks clean and comfortable
- Looks safe (electrical outlets covered, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, etc.)
- Has an outdoor play area that is fenced and free of debris (tree limbs, ant beds, broken glass, etc.)

**In General:**

- You agree with the discipline practices
- You hear the sounds of happy children
- You feel comfortable in this facility

**Confirm your Choice:** It is suggested that you visit the facility at least once during the first thirty (30) days of your child's enrollment. Visit at a time that is not your typical drop off and pick up times.

- Your child appears to be happy
- There is a balance between teacher-directed and child-directed activities
- The caregiver is open to your thoughts, comments, and suggestions
- The indicators above are still being met

**Turn Over:**

- Check how long the caregivers have been at the center or providing care in their homes
- Inquire about the average amount of time staff /teachers remain with the center or home

**Family Involvement:**

- Family involvement is encouraged
- The provider keeps you informed during the day
- Ask about the policy for parent visits

**Accreditation\***

- Find out if the child care provider has been accredited by a national organization (For centers: National Association for the Education of Young Children-NAEYC; For family care: National Association for Family Child Care-NAFCC)
- Find out about the providers educational background (Child Development Association Credential-CDA\*\*, College, etc.)

\* Child care providers who are accredited provide stimulating learning environments, meet stringent health and safety standards, and implement educationally appropriate activities and programs that foster learning that exceed the minimum state requirements.

\*\* A CDA is a credential for teachers of children ages 0-5. Teachers with a CDA have completed 120 hours of training in area such as: child development, curriculum and administration.

## **Age Appropriate Practices**

The following indicators reflect best practices and not necessarily minimum state regulatory standards in the child care industry.

### **INFANTS/TODDLERS**

- Children are encouraged to explore on their own with lots of floor time.
- Caregivers talk with children gently and use the children's name frequently.
- Infants/toddlers are **NOT** restricted to cribs, swings, playpens, infant seats, and walkers.
- Activities and toys stimulate all five senses: touch, taste, sight, sound, and smell.
- Toys are on the floor and on low shelves.
- Toys are washed and disinfected regularly.
- Infants are put on their backs to sleep.
- Children are read to frequently.

### **PRE-SCHOOL**

- Children's activities are "hands-on" and interactive.
- Books and print materials are available to the children and children are read to daily.
- Children have opportunities to speak, listen, and write.
- Multiple activities are out all the time (art, blocks, dress-up, etc.)
- Children learn through play and are given choices

### **SCHOOL-AGE**

- Children are encouraged to solve problems, initiate activities, explore, experiment, question and learn by doing.
- Equipment is of the size and variety to meet the developmental needs of your school-aged child.
- Homework is done as a choice, not a requirement.
- T.V. viewing is restricted.
- Caregiver encourages children to share experiences, ideas, and feelings.

The Early Start Child Care Resource & Referral Agency is here to assist you with a variety of parenting topics. Our office has a wealth of brochures, pamphlets and other materials to assist you with your child care questions. Please call our office with any of your parenting questions and we will be happy to provide research-based, educational materials to you at no charge.

We are also pleased to offer parenting workshops on a variety of topics. Please call our agency at 912.443.3011 to request information on any of our parenting workshops.

The Early Start Child Care Resource & Referral Agency is a program of the Savannah Technical College. Funded, in part, by Bright From The Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning through the Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant.

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**SAVANNAH TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

# **Interest Areas: Toys and Materials Information**

In searching for child care, observe if a variety of the following materials are available to the children.

## **Sensory Materials** (To stimulate the five senses)

### **INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- sucking toys
- rattles
- unbreakable mirrors (acrylic)
- patterned crib sheets
- mobiles
- music

### **TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- music boxes
- busy boxes
- push toys
- large bells, drums
- non-toxic play dough and finger paint (with close supervision)
- water play with cup & spoon
- fruit to taste (cut into small pieces)

### **2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- sand and water play with household objects
- scarves for dancing
- listening games
- textured boards
- tasting activities

### **3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- more tools for working with sand, water and play dough
- rhythm instruments
- wide variety of music
- cooking activities (with close supervision)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Active Play Equipment</b> (in large, open spaces and outside)</p>
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**INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- bounce chairs
- mobiles (activated by movement)
- things to reach and grab
- adults to bounce gently upon (with caution)
- bright colored balls

**TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- crawling tunnel
- riding toys
- cardboard boxes
- 2-3 steps to climb
- ramps to walk on
- balls
- push and pull toys

**2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- low climber
- low slide
- wagon
- homemade obstacle course
- sandbox with toys

**3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- swings
- low balancing beam
- low basketball hoop
- tricycle/big wheels
- jump ropes
- easy to play games such as “Follow the Leader”
- parachute

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Construction Materials</b> (in a quiet spot for building)</p>
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**INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- nesting toys
- large, soft blocks

**TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- cardboard blocks
- cups to stack
- toy pounding bench

**2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- blocks
- little people figures
- animals
- cars and trucks
- train and tracks
- wooden pegs, mallet, and Styrofoam

**3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- more unit block shapes and accessories
- props for road, town scenes
- woodworking bench and accessories (with careful one-on-one supervision)
- construction sets with small pieces (keep away from smaller children)

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Manipulative Toys</b> (on a low table)</p>
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**INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- large rings
- squeeze toys
- textured balls
- large measuring spoons

**TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- puzzles: 2-6 pieces with knobs
- nesting toys
- large pegboards\
- snap-together toys with big pieces

**2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- puzzles: 4-6 pieces
- big beads to string
- stacking toys
- scissors and cards to cut up

**3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- puzzles, pegboards
- stringing and snap together toys with smaller pieces according to ability level

<b>Doll &amp; Dramatic Play</b>
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**INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- soft dolls
- peek-a-boo games
- songs and finger plays

**TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- blankets to wrap dolls
- dishes, pans, spoons
- broom, sponge
- hats, unbreakable mirror (acrylic)
- shopping cart
- purses
- telephones
- pretend food

**2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- doll bed, carriages
- doll clothes
- realistic dolls
- tables and chairs
- toy stove, etc.
- dress-up clothes (simple)
- puppets

### **3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- boxes with dress-up clothes and realistic accessories to encourage theme
- play “restaurant,” “store,” “gas station,” “office,” and “airport.”
- Let the children be your GUIDE!

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Books &amp; Recordings</b> (in a soft, cozy spot)</p>
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### **INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- records of voices, sounds, animal sounds, music
- sturdy cloth or cardboard books
- lap books with large illustrations, picture of faces, large objects, bright shapes
- puppets

### **TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- books with simple stories, songs, fingerplays
- variety of picture and photographs on wall at eye level
- flannel board accessories

### **2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- book with stories about familiar things
- short story records, more songs, fingerplays
- written and picture labels on objects
- flannel board accessories

### **3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- more and more detailed stories
- access to record/tape player with instructions on care and use
- written and picture labels on object such as: name on cup, etc., to help associate written words with object
- child’s own words as dictated on artwork and in homemade books to be read back by child/adults
- more flannel accessories

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Art Materials</b> (near water &amp; low tables/chairs)</p>
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**INFANTS (birth to 12 months):**

- bright socks
- textured objects
- brightly colored toys

**TODDLERS (12 TO 24 months) – ADD:**

- frequent opportunities to explore messy edible/non-toxic substances (water-based finger painting)
- non-toxic markers (on boxes)
- chalk (on paper, cardboard, sidewalk)
- fat crayons (one color at a time)
- large paper to draw on (tape down)

**Art Materials - continued**

**2 – 3 YEAR OLDS – ADD:**

- Water-based paints with large brushes
- Scissors and things to cut
- Play dough
- 2-3 crayons at a time
- large paper, different texture, colors
- stickers and paper

**3 YEARS AND UP - ADD:**

- water colors
- hole punchers
- glue/paste and variety of things to glue onto paper
- magazines to cut up
- things to lick and stick
- crayons and markers of many colors
- natural objects (leaves, pine cones, etc.)
- collage material

# Children Learn From Play

Activity	Specific Skills Learned
Finding toys or learning materials to work with alone or with others	<b>Cognitive:</b> Makes decisions about interests and abilities.
	<b>Self-help:</b> Finds toys by himself or sets up environment for play.
	<b>Social/Language:</b> Learns to share, barter, manage conflict, and ask for help.
	<b>Emotional:</b> Learns about acceptance and rejection. Expresses needs.
Block play	<b>Physical:</b> Learns to balance blocks and line them up (small motor coordination). Matches blocks that look alike.
	<b>Cognitive:</b> May count blocks, sees patterns and design. Learn to build and plan structure.
	<b>Social:</b> Learns to share and cooperate.
Dramatic play	<b>Social:</b> Play adult roles. Develops self-image and coordinates with others.
	<b>Language:</b> Learns to express self in another role.
	<b>Cognitive:</b> Decides appropriate dress and appearance for role; uses visual perceptions to assess self, others and play environment. Learns and remembers behaviors to imitate. Develops abstract thinking abilities.
	<b>Self-help:</b> Dresses self. Sets up play environment and finds props.
Setting the table	<b>Cognitive:</b> Counts silverware, glasses, napkins, or places one object by each setting. Follow pattern of place settings.
	<b>Social:</b> Cooperates with other children. May teach younger children to help.
	<b>Physical:</b> Picks up and places objects (small motor coordination).
Sitting down to eat	<b>Physical:</b> Pours milk, passes the dish (small motor coordination).
	<b>Cognitive:</b> Measures to pour. Understands directions.

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Specific Skill Learned</b>
	<b>Social/Language:</b> Learns appropriate table conversation and manners
Story time or listening to music	<b>Cognitive:</b> Listens and retains information. Follows story line (sequencing) with eyes and/or ears. Recognizes words, pictures, instruments, and rhythms.
Fingerplays and songs	<b>Cognitive/Language:</b> Learns words, gestures, and melody (sequencing repetition, speech and listening skills). Follows directions.
	<b>Physical:</b> Coordination (small and large motor) for gestures and fingerplays.
Dance	<b>Cognitive/Language:</b> Listen to music and rhythms. Learns to understand simple movement, directions and their relationship to music.
	<b>Physical:</b> Coordinates movements (large motor).
Climbing/Riding	<b>Cognitive:</b> May count the rungs to the top of a climbing structure; plans the climb. Maps out direction and distance to ride; watches for others in path.
	<b>Physical:</b> Large motor coordination, balance.
	<b>Social:</b> Takes turns, interacts.
Sand play	<b>Cognitive:</b> Measures sand and maps out roads (spatial relationships).
	<b>Physical:</b> Pours, dumps, pushes, gathers, scoops, packs (small and large motor).
	<b>Social:</b> Shares, interacts, and cooperates.
Putting away toys	<b>Cognitive:</b> Sorts toys, follows directions.
	<b>Physical:</b> Places objects on the shelf, replaces lids, opens and shuts doors.
	<b>Social:</b> Takes turns, learns to handle toys carefully.

# **Early Start Child Care Resource & Referral Agency of Southeast Georgia**

Savannah Location  
190 Crossroads Parkway  
Savannah, GA 31407  
912.443.3011  
1.877.935.7575  
Fax: 912.443.6713

Early Start Child Care Resource & Referral Agency is pleased to provide this Parent Handbook to assist you as you begin your search for child care.

## **Complaint Procedures:**

**CHILD CARE FACILITIES:** If you observe actions you believe to be in violation of state rules and regulations and would like to file a complaint, or simply want to discuss any concerns, you may contact the state's regulatory body at 404-657-5562. You do not have to give your name, if you so choose. You may also contact the Early Start CCR&R and we will assist you in filing a complaint.

**Early Start CCR&R** If you need to file a complaint or voice a concern about a member of the Early Start CCR&R Parent Referral Staff or any other staff member please call our Savannah office and ask to speak to the Program Director. Your complaint will be logged and reviewed with the appropriate staff person. All information received will be kept confidential and you may choose to remain anonymous.



**Early Start Child Care Resource & Referral Agency**  
190 Crossroads Parkway  
Savannah, GA 31407

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