



Backup Child Care

You are going to put a lot of planning and effort into finding the best possible care for your child, but even the best child care arrangements don't always run like clockwork. Your child or child care provider may get sick. Schools close for vacations, holidays, trainings or even severe weather. You may need to work over time or take a work-related trip. Whatever the reason there will be times you need back-up child care.

Why should I worry about back up child care?

Recent studies conducted by Work/Family Directions found that one of the biggest problems working parents have is finding care when children are sick, or when regular child care arrangements break down. The very best time to think about backup care is when you are first making your regular child care plans. The next best time is right now! Here are a few ideas to help you get started.

How can I start planning for backup care?

- Talk with your spouse or partner about your schedules and child care needs. Discuss whose job is more flexible, who has more sick time or available time off. Having this conversation ahead of time might save you from a potentially heated discussion at 7:00AM when you discover your child cannot go to his/her regular scheduled child care provider.
- Understand your options at work. Make sure you understand your sick time and personal leave policies. Knowing how much flexibility you have ahead of time can make decisions about taking time off less stressful.
- What are your child's needs? Some children approach a new situation with enthusiasm, others may be upset or fearful. Most children are happiest with a familiar adult and a familiar setting. If you can't provide both, which is more important to your child?

What should I do first?

- There will be times when you'll need backup care that you can actually anticipate and write down on your calendar today. No matter what kind of care you use (child care center, family child care, a nanny, babysitter, friend or relative) ask now about any scheduled holidays and vacations.
- If your child is in school, get the school calendar

and check the dates for holidays, vacations, and early release days. If your child is in a before and after school program, you should also check the program calendar. And remember, no matter how carefully you plan, there are always situations that spring up with little or no warning. Plan for the unexpected!

How do I find backup care?

- Call The Children's Cabinet. A Child Care Resource and Referral Specialist will be able to assist you with a list of organizations and child care programs that provide backup care. There may be several options open to you.
- Your regular child care provider might be able to suggest a substitute provider or help you find substitute care.
- Friends, relatives, and other parents are often willing to share or trade child care for short periods of time.
- Family child care providers or child care centers in your area may offer backup child care or drop-in care to a few extra children as an extension of their regular services.
- School-age programs often extend their hours to provide care on holidays and school vacations.
- In-home and nanny agencies can sometimes send a provider to your home on very short notice.

**Remember that pre-registration
is required by many programs.
Be sure to ask!**



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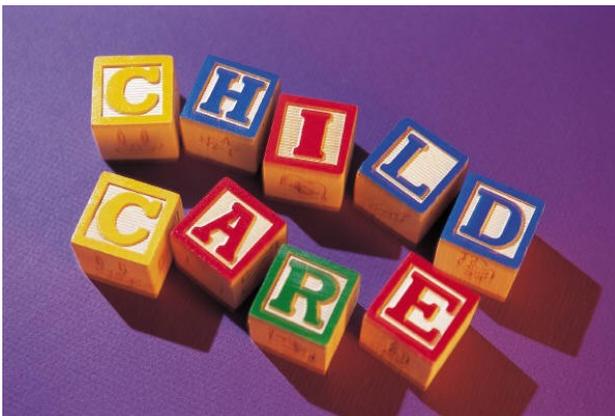


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What else can I do?

- In any situation, the best plan is to have as many options as possible. Plan to find at least two or three backup child care arrangements. Don't just line up one possibility and then stop. You may need a backup for your backup!
- Begin a file marked "Backup Child Care" to organize your information. Use the file to keep a list of any community programs or providers your child care specialist finds, with contact names and phone numbers. As you learn more about the programs available to you, collect any documents or pre-registration materials they require and put copies in your file. Almost all programs ask for family information (address, phone numbers, etc.) and child specific information (nicknames, allergies, sleeping patterns, etc.).
- Visit all providers you are considering for back-up care. You and your child will be more at ease with adjustments to temporary care if you have a chance to get to know the people and places ahead of time.

You want to find backup arrangements that make you and your child both feel comfortable. Taking the time to plan ahead and explore all your options now will allow you some peace of mind when you need backup child care.



**Having a plan and keeping it updated
is the best way to
prepare for the unexpected.**

Early Childhood Support Network (Washoe Co. Only)

The Early Childhood Support Network (ECSN) sick child care service enables parents to meet employment or school responsibilities when their child is sick and not able to attend child care or school. The ECSN caregivers have received specialized training in caring for mildly ill children of all ages and can administer approved medications. All caregivers carry photo ID and provide their own transportation to your home. Caregivers cannot transport children for any reason.

The Children's Cabinet employs a team of qualified early childhood caregivers. All caregivers are carefully screened and fingerprinted, trained and certified in areas such as CPR, first aid, infectious disease control, and have completed additional training in child growth and development.

How does this program work?

- Parents need to register with the service and complete an application packet before sick care can be requested.
- Call the ECSN hotline at **856-0125** when sick care is needed. Leave your name and number on the voice mail. Calls are returned and caregivers assigned between 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m. the day of care.
- Caregivers are scheduled for a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 8 hours per day.
- Forms are completed on the day sick care is requested to provide specific instructions. Parents are asked to allow at least 30 minutes before departing to complete the forms, and to allow the caregiver and child to become acquainted. This time is especially important to ensure that you and your child will have a positive experience with the caregiver.
- Parents are required to pay the caregiver upon departure. Fees are determined at the time of registration. Income eligible parents may be approved for a reduced hourly fee.



Child Care Plan for Parents

Child Care Resource & Referral

Parent Name _____

Date of Plan _____

Primary Provider

Primary Provider:	Contact Name:
Address:	Phone Number:
City: State: Zip:	Days and times of operation:
Meals Provided:	Observed Holidays or Center Closures:
Cost per week: \$	
Additional Fees: \$	Things to pack:

Back-Up Provider

Back-Up Provider:	Contact Name:
Address:	Phone Number:
City: State: Zip:	Days and times of operation:
Meals Provided:	Observed Holidays or Center Closures:
Cost per week: \$	
Additional Fees: \$	Things to pack:

Family, Friends, and Neighbors

Name:	Phone Number:
Address:	Alternate Number:
Days Available:	Times Available:

Name:	Phone Number:
Address:	Alternate Number:
Days Available:	Times Available:

Name:	Phone Number:
Address:	Alternate Number:
Days Available:	Times Available:

Early Childhood Support Network: In-home child care for mildly ill children

Name:	Phone Number:
Days Available:	Times Available:

Who can I call to pick up my child if I am unable to do so?*

Name:	Phone Number:
Name:	Phone Number:

* Make sure your child care provider has your written authorization that the above individuals may pick up your child.

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