



Backup Care

www.qualitycareforchildren.org

Metro Atlanta 877-722-2445 · Central Georgia 800-558-4804 · Northwest Georgia 800-308-1825

Even the best planned child care arrangements can be disrupted from time to time. Without emergency care, more commonly known as "backup care," working parents may be forced to stay home or bring their child to work with them.

Backup care may be needed whenever your regular child care arrangements are not available, when either your child or your provider is ill, when providers are on vacation, resign, or go out of business, when schools are closed, or any situation in which your regular child care arrangements fall through. By planning ahead and knowing your options, you can be prepared to meet the unexpected.

Work Considerations

For two parent families, the best place to begin is to talk with your spouse or partner ahead of time about your individual work schedules. Decide who can stay home and when. Be sure you know your time-off options, sick time, and flexibility at work so you will be ready when your child is under the weather or an emergency arises.

Ask your employer about backup care. More and more, businesses are realizing that by helping employees when child care arrangements break down or children are ill, they reduce unscheduled absences and create savings for the company. Some employers subsidize a portion of the cost of backup care for their employees. Sometimes companies sponsor arrangements by setting aside backup care "slots" in a community program, developing a program at the worksite, or providing a service to come into an employee's home.

Know Your Options

At the same time you set up your regular child care, begin to consider your options for back up care. Start right away. It is inevitable your child care will break down at some point. You may need to use a combination of options to provide care. For example, you could choose in-home care for when your child is ill, a program provided by your employer for a snow day, and a community program for school holidays.

Consider which of your relatives, friends, or neighbors might be available to help you on an emergency basis. Talk to them about when it might be appropriate for you to call them. In some situations, you may be able to find another parent who is willing to help you out in exchange for some evening or weekend hours.

Some communities have a range of options for you to consider: specialized centers for nursing mildly ill children, in-home caregiver services, visiting nurse service, home health agencies, or nanny placement agencies. Some family child care providers and child care centers may provide temporary care. If your child is very sick you will want to be with her.

Call Quality Care for Children and ask about providers in your community who provide backup care. Discuss your specific needs and what options are available for your family. Some programs provide care on an emergency care basis and others are specifically designed for holidays and school vacations. Some family child care providers may be able to take your child because of part-time attendance by other children.

How to Work with Caregivers

Children inevitably get sick, and for working parents these illnesses can cause great difficulty. It can be tough to judge if your child is too ill to attend your regular child care program. Ask yourself if your child can participate comfortably and if his needs will interfere with the care of the other children. Be familiar with your child care program's policies on illness. Do not pressure your caregiver to take your sick child, it is her responsibility to maintain a healthy environment for all the children enrolled.