



Maryland EXCELS is a Quality Rating and Improvement System that:

- Recognizes the accomplishments of early childhood and school-age programs;
- Provides information to families on choosing quality care and education; and
- Articulates to the public the level of quality in early education and school-age child care programs.

Maryland EXCELS awards ratings through five progressive quality levels that define a pathway to excellence. When a program joins Maryland EXCELS, the program has made a commitment to continuous quality improvement. This rating system helps Maryland achieve the following goals:

- To recognize child care and early education programs that provide high-quality experiences for children;
- To encourage programs to increase the level of quality they provide and to define a pathway to help them achieve excellence;
- To provide families with information and choices about high-quality early childhood and school-age care options.

Want to Learn More? ✓

Visit us online at
www.marylandexcels.org

Download the free mobile app
at the Apple Store or Google Play.

Visit the Maryland State Department of Education's
Division of Early Childhood Development website at
<http://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org>



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MARYLAND EXCELS
CHECK FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS



A Quality Rating System
to Recognize Excellence
in Early Childhood and
School-Age Programs

www.marylandexcels.org

✓ Why is high-quality child care and early education so important?

Children who do well in school typically do well in life. Children who are prepared when they start school are more likely to do well throughout their school careers. High-quality child care helps children gain essential skills they need to be successful learners such as:

- Social, emotional and communication skills;
- Pre-literacy and basic mathematical skills and concepts; and
- An awareness of their environment and the roles of the people in it.



✓ How do families choose child care or other early education programs?

There are many variables that impact child care choices for families. The cost, location and hours of operation are basic considerations – but just as important is the quality of care. High-quality child care and early education ensures that:

- Children are in a safe, healthy and developmentally appropriate environment;
- The staff is well-trained, promotes positive interactions and is responsive to the needs of all children; and
- Learning opportunities are available for all children based upon curriculum planning that includes children's interests and skills, and with activities that will help prepare them for Kindergarten and beyond.

While every family deserves these qualities in an early education or child care program, it's not always easy to tell whether a program provides them. Therefore child care and early education programs – whether they are based in a center, a home or a public school – need ways to describe themselves to families, to paint a picture of the quality services they provide.

✓ How does Maryland EXCELS help early childhood and child care programs?

Maryland EXCELS:

- Recognizes the quality work programs are already offering;

- Provides free marketing so that families looking for child care can locate Maryland EXCELS programs with a mobile app or website;
- Offers personalized technical supports to achieve higher ratings and improve the quality and market profile of programs; and
- Helps you achieve your goal of providing the highest-quality care possible to the children you work with every day.

✓ How does Maryland EXCELS help families?

Maryland EXCELS helps families by:

- Providing information on services that meet the individual needs of your child;
- Helping you find and choose a high-quality child care program in your area; and
- Improving the quality of child care and early education throughout Maryland by offering participating programs incentives and supports that encourage and reward them for their participation and for increasing their quality level rating.



MARYLAND EXCELS
www.marylandexcels.org

Searching for quality child care and early education programs that promote school-readiness has never been easier, thanks to Maryland EXCELS!

Quality matters! The early years are critical when it comes to building social, emotional, thinking, and learning skills. Children with these skills are more likely to succeed in school and in life.

Maryland EXCELS builds upon the foundation of the State's rigorous child care licensing requirements. Every licensed program is inspected by the State at least once each year to ensure compliance with Maryland regulations.

Maryland EXCELS provides the opportunity for programs to demonstrate achievements that exceed state licensing requirements.

Upon review and verification, programs publish a rating from 1 to 5 (with 5 being the highest quality level) on the online Find a Program portal and in the Quality Finder mobile App.

Publishing a rating at any level, including level 1, demonstrates a program's commitment to continuous quality improvement.

1



- ✓ Licensed and inspected to determine safety, cleanliness, proper supervision of children, and staff qualifications
- ✓ Activities support each and every child's individual needs
- ✓ Family-teacher conferences



2

- ✓ Children's developmental progress observed
- ✓ 2+ opportunities for families to engage in the program
- ✓ Activities informed by early learning guidelines
- ✓ Family-teacher conferences held at least once a year

- ✓ Licensed and inspected to determine safety, cleanliness, proper supervision of children, and staff qualifications
- ✓ Activities support each and every child's individual needs



3

- ✓ Children's developmental progress measured
- ✓ Staff have increased training and experience
- ✓ 3+ opportunities for families to engage in the program
- ✓ Activities informed by early learning guidelines
- ✓ Family-teacher conferences held at least once a year

- ✓ Licensed and inspected to determine safety, cleanliness, proper supervision of children, and staff qualifications
- ✓ Activities support each and every child's individual needs



4

- ✓ Children's developmental progress measured and linked to curriculum
- ✓ Staff have higher levels of training and experience
- ✓ Continuous quality improvement process informed by independent assessors
- ✓ 4+ opportunities for families to engage in the program
- ✓ Activities aligned with a state-recommended curriculum
- ✓ Family-teacher conferences held at least twice per year

- ✓ Licensed and inspected to determine safety, cleanliness, proper supervision of children, and staff qualifications
- ✓ Activities support each and every child's individual needs



- ✓ Children's developmental progress assessed with multiple measures and linked to curriculum
- ✓ Staff meet highest levels of training and experience
- ✓ Continuous quality improvement process informed by independent assessors
- ✓ State or national accreditation achieved
- ✓ 5+ opportunities for families to engage in the program
- ✓ State recommended curriculum used
- ✓ Family-teacher conferences held at least twice per year

- ✓ Licensed and inspected to determine safety, cleanliness, proper supervision of children, and staff qualifications
- ✓ Activities support each and every child's individual needs



¿Cómo elige usted un programa de cuidado infantil o educación temprana?



MARYLAND EXCELS ESTÁ AQUÍ PARA AYUDAR

Los primeros cinco años de la vida de un niño establecen la base para el resto de su vida. Estos primeros años tienen un gran impacto en la manera en que los niños van a ser exitosos en el jardín infantil, en la escuela y en su vida.

Esoger un programa de cuidado infantil y educación temprana para su niño es una de las decisiones más importantes que usted va a tomar. Usted seguramente tomará en consideración el costo, la conveniencia del lugar adónde está el programa, pero ha considerado lo más importante, ¿la calidad?

Su niño merece estar en un ambiente de calidad que se comprometa con las familias, que sea sensible a las habilidades individuales de cada niño, a su cultura y que promueva el amor por aprender.

Maryland EXCELS ayuda a las familias a encontrar cuidado infantil y programas de educación temprana de alta calidad que respondan a las necesidades de sus niños.

ENCUENTRE UN PROGRAMA QUE RESPONDA A SUS NECESIDADES ÚNICAS

Usted o su niño pueden tener necesidades o requerimientos específicos que son importantes para usted al seleccionar un programa. Maryland EXCELS identifica a programas que han cumplido con requerimientos adicionales en las siguientes áreas.



Centro de cuidado infantil con prevención del asma



Salud y bienestar



Ecológico



Competencia cultural y de lenguaje



Prácticas de negocios de alta calidad

Utilice la función *Encuentre un Programa* en la página MarylandEXCELS.org o la aplicación móvil para localizar programas con estas especializaciones.



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✓ **¡La calidad cuenta!**

¡Visite www.marylandexcels.org hoy mismo!



UNA GUÍA para padres de familia sobre centros de cuidado infantil de alta calidad

LO QUE USTED NECESITA SABER ACERCA DE LOS PROGRAMAS DE NIÑEZ TEMPRANA Y PROGRAMAS ESCOLARES

www.marylandexcels.org

MARYLAND EXCELS
CHECK FOR QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL-AGE PROGRAMS

How do **YOU** choose?



**MARYLAND EXCELS IS
HERE TO HELP!**

Children's first five years lay the foundation for the rest of their lives. These early years have a major impact on how children succeed in kindergarten, in school, and in their lives.

Choosing child care and early education for your child is one of the most important decisions you will make. You will consider the cost, convenience and location of a program, but will you consider the most important factor – quality? Your child deserves to be in a quality environment that engages with families, is sensitive to each child's individual skills and culture, and promotes a love of learning.

Maryland EXCELS helps families find high quality child care and early learning programs that fit theirs and their children's needs.

FIND A PROGRAM THAT MATCHES YOUR UNIQUE NEEDS.

You or your child may have specific needs or requirements that are important to you when selecting a program. Maryland EXCELS identifies programs that have met additional requirements in these areas:



Asthma-Friendly Child Care



Health and Wellness



Eco-Friendly Program



Cultural and Linguistic Competency



Quality Business Practices

Use the Find A Program feature on MarylandEXCELS.org or the mobile app to locate programs with these specializations.

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QUALITY MATTERS!

Visit www.marylandexcels.org today!

A PARENT'S GUIDE TO Quality Child Care



**WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT EARLY
CHILDHOOD AND
SCHOOL-AGE
PROGRAMS**

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What does high quality look like?

- ✓ Program staff and educators are responsive to the needs of each individual child;
- ✓ Interactions between staff, children, and families are warm, positive and respectful;
- ✓ Learning opportunities and materials are developmentally appropriate, plentiful, and interactive;
- ✓ Teachers consider the strengths, interests, needs and cultural background of each child when planning activities;
- ✓ Health, safety, positive relationships, and learning are priorities of the program; and
- ✓ Families are welcome and encouraged to be engaged in all aspects of the program.

**YOUR CHILD DESERVES THE BEST,
BECAUSE QUALITY MATTERS!**



What is Maryland EXCELS?

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

The MarylandEXCELS.org website and mobile app help families identify child care and early education programs that have attained one of five quality levels. By choosing a Maryland EXCELS participating program, families know that the program is committed to quality and continuous improvement by meeting standards that exceed the state's licensing requirements.

Maryland EXCELS rates the quality of child care and early learning programs on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest rating. Programs demonstrate their competence in these areas: Staffing and Professional Development, Accreditation and Program Improvement, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, and Administrative Policies and Practices. Programs with ratings 1 through 4 are meeting standards above the minimum licensing requirements and are committed to improving the quality of the services they provide to children and families.

Level Five programs meet the highest benchmarks in the Maryland EXCELS system and are state or nationally accredited.

www.marylandexcels.org

Where do I start?



FIND A HIGH QUALITY PROGRAM FOR YOUR CHILD.

- ✓ Ensure that the program is licensed or registered by using CheckCCMD.org to review their licensing inspection history.
- ✓ Search for Maryland EXCELS quality rated programs by using the Maryland EXCELS mobile app and the MarylandEXCELS.org website.
- ✓ Select Find A Program and search by zip code, type of program, or your child's individual needs, such as searching for Asthma-Friendly programs.
- ✓ Visit Maryland Family Network's LOCATE Child Care site at MarylandFamilyNetwork.org or call them toll-free at 877-261-0060.
- ✓ Contact the program and arrange a visit to determine if the program is right for you and your child.
- ✓ Ask the child care or early education program about Maryland EXCELS and how they help children enter school ready to succeed.

Do You Use a Child Care Subsidy Voucher?

If you are eligible for a Child Care Subsidy voucher to assist with the cost of child care, you must choose a Maryland EXCELS participating program.

¿Qué características tiene un programa de alta calidad?

- ✓ El personal y los educadores responden a las necesidades individuales de cada niño;
- ✓ Las interacciones entre el personal, los niños y las familias son cálidas, positivas y respetuosas;
- ✓ Las actividades de aprendizaje y los materiales son de acuerdo al desarrollo de los niños, variados e interactivos;
- ✓ Los maestros toman en cuenta las fortalezas, intereses, necesidades y el origen cultural de cada niño al planear actividades para ellos;
- ✓ La salud, la seguridad, interacciones positivas y el aprendizaje son las prioridades del programa; y
- ✓ Las familias son bienvenidas y se les motiva a que participen en todos los aspectos del programa.

**SU NIÑO MERECE LO MEJOR,
PORQUE LA CALIDAD SI CUENTA!**



¿Qué es Maryland EXCELS?

Maryland EXCELS es un sistema de calificación y de mejoramiento para los programas de cuidado infantil y de enseñanza temprana que cumplen con estándares de calidad reconocidos a nivel nacional.

La página de internet MarylandEXCELS.org y la aplicación móvil ayudan a las familias a identificar programas de cuidado infantil y de educación temprana que han obtenido uno de cinco niveles de calidad. Al escoger un programa participante en Maryland EXCELS, las familias saben que el programa está comprometido a la calidad y continuo mejoramiento al cumplir con estándares que exceden los requerimientos estatales de licencia.

Maryland EXCELS califica los programas de cuidado infantil y de enseñanza temprana en una escala del 1 al 5, donde 5 es la calificación más alta. Los programas deben de demostrar su competencia en las áreas de: Personal y Desarrollo Profesional, Acreditación y Mejoramiento de Programa, Prácticas Apropriadas al Desarrollo Infantil y Prácticas y Políticas Administrativas. Los programas con calificación del 1 al 4 cumplen con estándares superiores a los requerimientos mínimos de licencia y están comprometidos al mejoramiento de la calidad de los servicios que proporcionan a los niños y a las familias.

Los programas en el nivel 5 cumplen con los parámetros más altos del sistema de Maryland EXCELS y son programas acreditados a nivel estatal o nacional.

www.marylandexceels.org

¿Adónde puedo comenzar?



ENCUENTRE UN PROGRAMA DE ALTA CALIDAD PARA SU NIÑO

- ✓ Asegúrese que el programa tiene licencia o está registrado usando la página CheckCCMD.org para revisar el historial de inspecciones.
- ✓ Busque programas que tenga una calificación de Maryland EXCELS usando la aplicación móvil de Maryland EXCELS o en la página de internet MarylandEXCELS.org.
- ✓ Seleccione la función *Encuentre un Programa* y haga una búsqueda por código postal, tipo de programa, o las necesidades individuales de su niño, como programas con prevención del asma.
- ✓ Visite LOCATE Child Care de la red de Maryland Family Network en la página de internet MarylandandFamilyNetwork.org o llame gratis al 877-261-0060.
- ✓ Contacte al programa y solicite una visita para determinar si el programa es adecuado para usted y su niño.
- ✓ Pregúntele al programa de cuidado infantil o de educación temprana sobre Maryland EXCELS y cómo ellos ayudan a los niños a prepararse para ser exitosos en la escuela.

¿Usa usted cupones de subsidio de cuidado infantil? Si usted es elegible para los Cupones de Subsidio de Cuidado Infantil para asistirlo con los costos de cuidado infantil, usted debe de elegir un programa que esté participando en Maryland EXCELS.