

CHILDREN: CHILDCARE & SCHOOLING

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

The Office of Work/Life Resources helps members of the Harvard community meet family-related challenges, and in particular helps with childcare and schooling questions. The Office serves as the liaison with the six Harvard-affiliated childcare centers. Staff can connect you with Harvard and community resources and provide general information about choosing child-care and school options. *A Family Resource Handbook*, published by the Office of Work/Life Resources and by the Medical Center Office of Work and Family, is available upon request. Students and visiting scholars are invited to begin by consulting the office's website at <http://atwork.harvard.edu/worklife/>. Faculty and staff may go to: <http://harvie.harvard.edu/workandlife/>. The e-mail address is worklife@harvard.edu; telephone is 617-495-4100. The Harvard Medical Center Office of Work and Family provides information and referrals on childcare and parenting resources (including public school issues and elder care), as well as lunch time presentations geared to the concerns of parents. The office is located at 164 Longwood Avenue, Room 308, Boston, (617) 432-1615. It is open Monday through Friday 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, by appointment only.

Cambridge Child Care Resource Center, 130 Bishop Allen Drive, Cambridge; (617) 547-1063, (617) 547-3340.
www.cccrcinc.org

Family Day Care

Providers of family day care are licensed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to take care of a limited number of children in their private homes. Individual providers set their own fees. Quality, style, and service differ greatly among these providers. One benefit of this type of childcare arrangement is flexible hours. It is important to visit the family day care home, speak with the provider, and make detailed arrangements in advance. The Office of Work/Life Resources can provide you a list of family day care providers in your area.

Day Care Centers

Usually day care centers offer all-day programs and may offer part-day programs as well. Each center sets its own policies concerning age of children (generally, three months to five years), hours available (usually, part or full day between 7:30 am and 6:00 p.m.), and fees (as much as \$1600 monthly for daily, full-time care). There are numerous day care centers in Cambridge, Boston, and surrounding towns. You should contact them very soon after you arrive, particularly when infant care is needed. There are six independent, non-profit day care centers located on Harvard's Cambridge Campus. Enrollment priority is given to Harvard affiliates and spaces fill quickly. Parents are advised to contact the centers directly. Sometimes limited scholarship or sliding scale fees (according to income) may be available. Call the centers directly for specific financial information.

Nursery Schools

Generally, programs are for children ages two years, nine months to five and take place in the mornings for three hours. However, some offer programs for younger children; some offer two, three, or five-day enrollment options; some offer extended afternoon schedules. Fees vary accordingly. Some co-operative nursery schools involve parents in their day-to-day operations and therefore are somewhat less expensive. All schools are licensed by the state and must meet building and health codes in the area where they are located.

Baby Sitters

Part-time or occasional care is usually found through referrals. Some suggestions for finding baby sitters: join a co-operative baby sitting pool in your housing area; check bulletin boards at the HIO and other campus locations or post your notice on these boards; inquire about referrals from colleagues and department staff; call the Harvard Student Employment Office (495-2585). You may also post a baby sitting position through the Career Resource Office at Lesley University http://www.lesley.edu/services/crc/crhome_employers.html. Private agencies are listed in the yellow pages of local phone books. They will generally charge much higher fees. In all cases, be sure to ask the baby sitter for references and previous experience with children.

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FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

Public Schools

Each city or town has its own public (government run schools) schools for children aged 4 or 5 to 18. By law, these schools are free for those who live in the community.

Please note that as long as you live in a community, that city or town is obliged to enroll your child in its school system, regardless of your nationality, the timing of your arrival, or the length of your stay. The school year normally begins in early September (sometime during the week after Labor Day) and continues through the third week in June. You must contact your local school department to inquire about its enrollment procedure. In general, to register a child in school, parents should bring proof of the child's age (either a birth certificate or passport), current immunization records, and proof of local residency. Consult the HIO's printed information entitled "Public Schools in the Boston Area" for details.

In Cambridge, new families should contact the Family Resource Center located at Cambridge Ringe and Latin High School, Two Felton Street, Cambridge MA 02138 (617-349-6550). Cambridge public schools require completion of a Certificate of Address form with a parent signature authorized by a notary public. The HIO has copies of this form and can direct you to a notary public. For detailed information on enrollment in Cambridge elementary schools, please consult the flyer entitled *Cambridge Public Schools*.

Immunizations

If your child lacks the immunizations required for school enrollment and you are a Cambridge resident, you may make an appointment at one of the Cambridge Neighborhood Health Clinics. The HIO has a list of these clinics and a map showing their locations. In other cities and towns school officials will usually direct you to local health facilities.

Private and Parochial Schools

There are many private primary and secondary schools in the Boston/Cambridge area. Applications are usually submitted in the winter preceding fall enrollment, but spaces may be available at any given time. Tuition may range from \$5,000 to \$15,000 per year. Parents must arrange for transportation. Parochial schools are private schools with a religious affiliation. There are several within a reasonable distance of the Harvard community. Please consult the flyer entitled *Private Schools; Private Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Boston Area* for a list of some area private and parochial schools.

Community and After-School Programs

These programs are available in many public school districts at reasonable costs. They allow children to remain at their schools for an extended period after the regular school closing time. Various planned and supervised activities are offered along with snacks. Parents must usually provide transportation from the after-school program to their homes. Inquire at the School Department of your community about these programs.



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