

Child Care Search User Guide

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Introduction

The Child Care Search is a new, online tool from the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R). It is powered by Iowa Child Care Connect (C3) and found at <https://childcaresearch.iowa.gov>. You may also access the Child Care Search on the Iowa Child Care Connect website at <https://childcareconnect.iowa.gov>.

The Child Care Search helps parents and families find child care options that meet their needs along their commute to work or school. The Child Care Search links families to quality care, one connection at a time.

In addition to searching along a route or in a radius from one location, filters can narrow down a search based on the ages of children and hours when care is needed, whether the program is

in a home or child care center, accepts [Child Care Assistance \(CCA\)](#), participates in the [Iowa Quality for Kids \(IQ4K®\) Program](#), etc.

Users can initiate a manual search for child care openings along a route, or near an address. To search along a route, follow the instructions in the [Find Child Care Options Along Route section](#) – for instructions on searching near an address, skip to the [Search Near An Address section](#) of this document.

Use the Child Care Guided Search to walk step-by-step through a guided child care search to find child care providers that meet your needs. Click on the orange “Help me find a child care provider” button and see the [Guided Search section](#).

Consumer Education

After entering the Child Care Search website address in an internet browser, scanning the QR code, or selecting ‘Child Care Search’ on the Iowa Child Care Connect website, information about child care in Iowa displays. Users can scroll through the information and learn about the types of child care programs, the CCA Program, and IQ4K®. Users can click on ‘Skip to the end’ to go to the end of the consumer education.

At the end of the consumer education, users click on either ‘Guided Search’ to use the step-by-step series of question or ‘Search by Route’ to complete a manual search.



Are you ready to find child care?

This tool is here to help you connect with the best child care solution for your child. You can use our guided search, where you will be asked questions to help you find child care providers that match your needs. Or, you can explore the map, enter a route, and customize your search.

Guided Search

Search by Route

You can also talk with a Parent Services Specialist at [855-244-5301](tel:855-244-5301) to get answers to your child care questions.

Child Care Search Options

Guided Search

The Guided Search breaks the child care search into a series of seven easy questions. On each screen, users answer the question and select “Continue” in the bottom right corner to navigate to the next screen. As you progress through the questions, the number of matching child care providers updates in the green box in the top right corner, seen below:

2710 child care providers match your selections

Question 1: Child Care Immediacy

If you need child care now, or if you are planning for later. Select “Now” if you are looking for child care within a month, or “Planning for later” if you are planning for beyond a month from now. Then, press “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

Are you looking for Child Care now, or are you planning for later (more than a month from now)?



The image shows two square buttons side-by-side. The left button is light blue and contains a clock icon with the text 'Now' below it. The right button is light gray and contains a calendar icon with the text 'Planning for later' below it.

Question 2: Number and Ages of Children Needing Child Care

Use the + button to select the number of children needing child care. Then, use the dropdown menu to set each child’s age group, screenshot to the right. Then, press “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

How many children do you need Child Care for?



The screenshot shows a user interface for selecting the number of children and their age groups. At the top, there are three buttons: a minus sign, the number '2', and a plus sign. Below this is the question 'Which age groups do your children fit into?'. There are two dropdown menus labeled 'Child 1 Age:' and 'Child 2 Age:', both currently set to '2 years'. A dropdown menu is open for the second child, showing a list of age groups: '0-12 months', '13-23 months', '2 years', '3 years', '4-5 years', and '5+ years'. A mouse cursor is pointing at the '4-5 years' option.

Question 3: Iowa Quality for Kids Preference

Select “Yes” or “No Preference” based on your preference for a program that participates in Iowa’s voluntary child care quality rating and improvement system program called Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®). Then, press “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

IQ4K® is Iowa’s voluntary Quality Rating and Improvement System. Child Care programs with an IQ4K® rating participate in continuous quality improvement with proven outcomes for children. Would you like a program who is rated in IQ4K®?

 Yes	 No Preference
--	--

Find more information about IQ4K® here: [Iowa Quality for Kids \(IQ4K®\)](#)

Question 4: Child Care Assistance Preference

Select “Yes” or “No Preference” based on your preference for a child care provider who accepts children on the Child Care Assistance (CCA) Program.

Then, press “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

Find information about Iowa’s Child Care Assistance Program here: [Child Care Assistance \(iowa.gov\)](#)

Are you looking for a Child Care program that accepts Child Care Assistance (CCA)?

 Yes	 No preference
--	--

Question 5: Days/Times of Child Care Needs

This screen asks you to select the days that you need child care. The screen defaults to selecting every weekday. If you do not need child care every weekday, uncheck the days that you do not need child care.

Click the “Include Weekends” box to find providers with weekend availability.

Many Child Care programs are open from 7 AM to 6 PM, Monday through Friday. Does this work for you, or do you need something more flexible?

Include Weekends

- Monday >
- Tuesday >
- Wednesday >
- Thursday >
- Friday >

Next, you can customize the times you need child care:

- Click on the arrow next to a day of the week to see more time options.
- Each day of the week is automatically set to “Select All Times.”
- Select “Standard Hours” or “Custom Time Selection” to narrow your search criteria.
 - To set a “Custom Time Selection,” click on the clock icon to select custom start and end times (as seen below).
- Make time selections for each day of the week.
- Click “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

Include Weekends

Monday

Select All Times
 Standard Hours (7am -6pm)
 Custom Time Selection

06:30 PM - 02:30 PM

Tuesday >
 Wednesday >
 Thursday >
 Friday >

02 30 PM
03 31 AM
04 32
05 33
06 34
07 35
08 36

Question 6: Child Care Setting

This screen asks if you are looking for a home-based child care program, a child care center, or if you have no preference. Select your preferred option and click “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

Child Care programs can be in a residential setting (home-based child care program) or in commercial setting (child care center/preschool). What type of Child Care setting are you wanting?



Question 7: Type of Child Care Search

This screen asks if you are looking for child care providers along a route, or if you are searching for providers near your home or a specific address. Make your selection, then press “Continue” to navigate to the next screen.

Search Along Route

If you selected “Along Route,” on the next screen enter your home and work/school addresses to define your search route.

As you begin typing in each address box, auto-completed addresses will appear in the dropdown menu. Continue typing until you see your desired address, and then click on it.

Complete this process for both your home and work/school addresses. Then, in the dropdown menu, select the maximum distance you are willing to deviate from the route. Press “Submit” to continue.

You will navigate to the Compare page to compare all your customized, provider results. [See the Compare Page section of this document for more information.](#)

What is your home address?

2903 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA

What is your work/school address?

1907 Carp

- 1907 Carpenter Avenue Des Moines, IA, USA
- 1907 Carpenter Street Carlisle, IA, USA
- 1907 Carpenter Street Norwalk, IA, USA
- 1907 Carpenter St Papillon, NE, USA
- 1907 Carpenter Street Omaha, NE, USA

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Search Close to Home

If you selected “Close to Home,” on the next screen enter your home address or another specific address to define your search area.

As you begin typing in the address box, auto-completed addresses will appear in the dropdown menu. Continue typing until you see your desired address, and then click on it.

Then, use the **−** and **+** symbols to update the distance you are willing to travel for child care.

Then, click “Submit” to continue. Next, the Compare page displays to compare all your customized provider results. [See the Compare page section of this document for more information.](#)

What is your home address?

1907 Carpenter Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA

And lastly, how far are you willing to go? What's your travel limit for the child care?

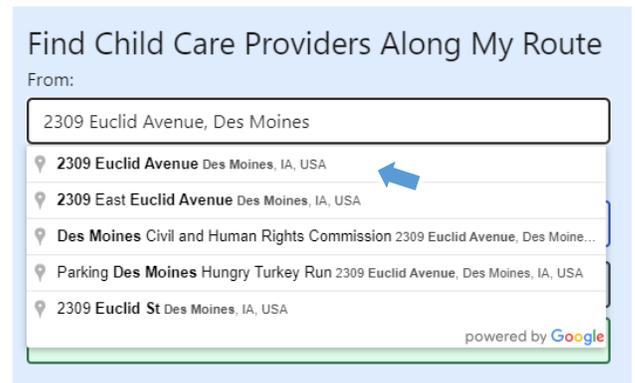
− 2 + Mile(s)

Find Child Care Providers Along My Route

The manual search option allows users to enter address information to begin their search. Following is the screen that displays when completing a “Search by Route.”

Add your Home Address

- Begin typing your home address in the “From” box. As you type, the dropdown box will appear with auto-completed addresses.
- Continue typing your address until your full home address appears, and click it, as seen in the screenshot to the right.



Optional: Add a Stop on Your Route

If your route has one or more stops between home and work (such as a school drop-off), you may add this stop to the route.

- Click the “Add Destination to Route” button to add a stop on your route.
- Begin typing the address for the stop in the new Destination box and click the correct auto-completed address when it appears in the dropdown.
- Repeat the two steps above for each stop you want to add to the route.
- If you want to remove a stop, click the red “minus” button next to the address box.

Find Child Care Providers Along My Route

From:
2309 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA

Destination:
1907 Carpenter Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA

To:
Work Address

Add Destination to Route (+)

Search

Add Work/School Address

- Begin typing your work/school address or final destination in the “To” box and click on the correct auto-completed address when it appears in the dropdown menu.
- Finally, click the green “Search” button to navigate to the [Map screen with your results](#).

Search Near an Address

- To search for child care providers near an address, begin typing the address in the “Enter an Address” box on the right side of the Home screen. As you type, the dropdown box will appear with auto-completed addresses.
- Continue typing your address until the correct address appears and click on it, as seen in the screenshot to the right.
- Then, click the green “Search” button to navigate to the [Map screen](#) with your results.

Or, Enter an Address

1907 ca

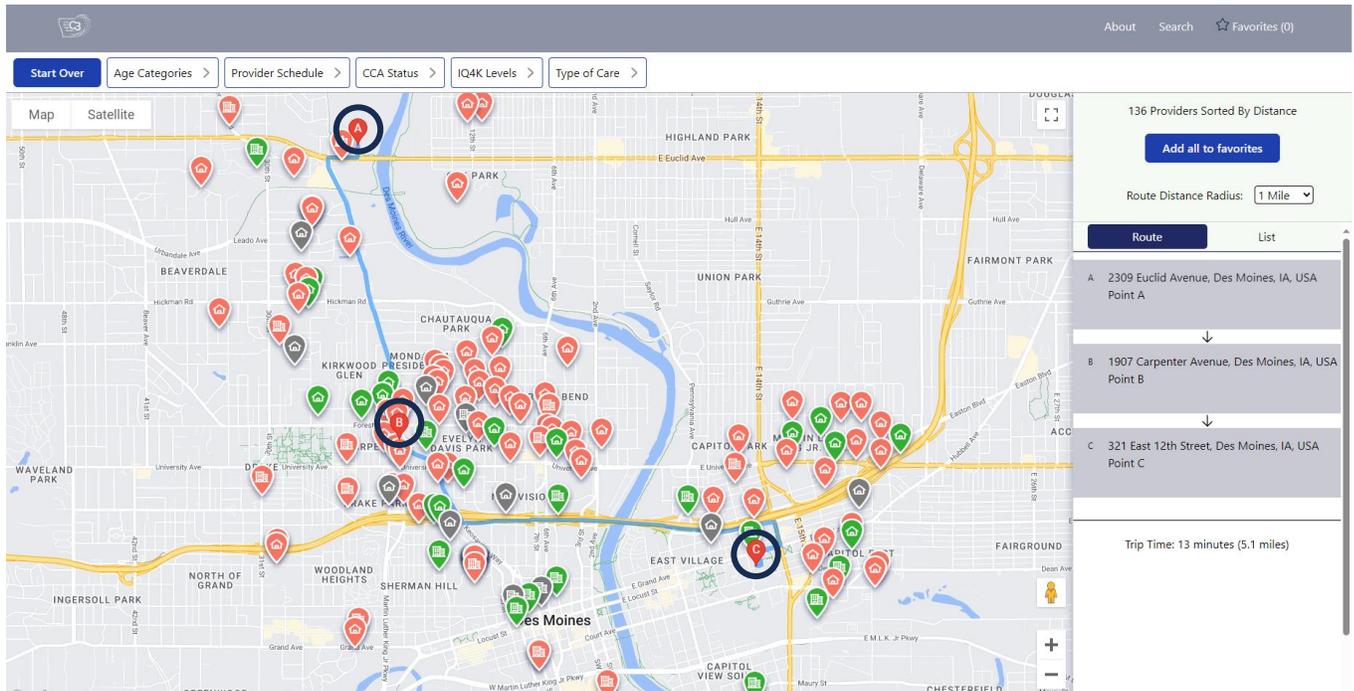
- 1907 Carpenter Avenue Des Moines, IA, USA
- 1907 ...lar Street Omaha, NE, USA
- 1907 Carey Avenue Davenport, IA, USA
- 1907 Calvin Avenue Iowa City, IA, USA
- 1907 Cass Street Omaha, NE, USA

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Map Screen

A map displays the results of your search, as seen below.

If the route or location seems incorrect, click the blue “Start Over” button in the top left corner to return to the Home Screen and re-enter your addresses.



Navigating the Map Area

If you completed a route search, the calculated route is visibly highlighted in blue, and each stop entered is marked with a red marker (labeled A, B, and C in the image above – a black circle is drawn around the red markers).

If you searched for child care near an address, the address is marked with a red marker: 

You can move the map in any direction by clicking and dragging on the map. You can zoom in by using the scroll wheel on your mouse or by clicking the **+** or **-** buttons in the bottom right of the map area.

Map Results

Each pin on the map represents a child care provider that meets the search and filter criteria. See the [Filtering Results section](#) for additional information about how to set and clear filters to customize your results.

Green-Colored pins represent providers with child care openings based on filter(s) applied.

Salmon-Colored pins represent providers that do not have child care openings based on filter(s) applied.

Gray-Colored pins represent “Non-referral” providers with restricted enrollment, or programs that are not accepting new enrollment applications. Some examples of non-referral providers include on-site employer-sponsored child care only available to the company’s employees, enrollment restricted to children attending a private school in the same building, or a provider that will be retiring soon and not accepting new children.

Additionally, the pin icon represents the type of child care provider:

Registered Child Development Homes and non-registered Child Care Homes with a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement are represented by this icon:



Licensed Child Care Centers or Preschools are represented by this icon:



Together, the pin color and icon provide at-a-glance information about each result. The pin above represents a Child Care Center with child care openings based on filter(s) applied.

Provider Result Details

Click on any child care provider pin on the map or click on the provider’s name in the provider list on the right to see more information about the provider. **Note:** If you are searching along a route, you must first click the “List” tab in the sidebar to view the provider list.

The sidebar displays the provider’s:

- Name
- Address
- Contact information
- CCA Status
- Current full and part-time openings
- Training with supporting children with special needs
- Transportation information

Angelique Bell

[Add Provider to Route](#)

1549 30th St, Des Moines, IA 50315 (503) 246-0828 •
angeliquebell100@gmail.com [Accepts CCA](#)

Age Group	Full Time Openings	Part Time Openings
Infant (0 - 12mo.)	0	0
Infant (13 - 23mo.)	3	0
Toddler (2yr.)	3	0
Preschool (3yr.)	3	0
Preschool (4 - 5yr.)	3	0
School Age (6yr.+)	3	0

Experience/Training supporting children with special needs No

Transportation Near Public Transportation, Provider Does Not Transport

Note that **Gray-Colored** pins representing “Non-referral” providers have some details hidden, such as contact information and current openings. See the screenshot on the right for an example.

To return to the provider list, click the back arrow in the top left of the sidebar.



Provider Name
Provider Address

CCA Status

Accepts CCA

IQ4K Level

Not Rated

Days/Hours of Operation



Enrollment restricted/program not accepting new enrollment applications.

Previewing Routes

If you are searching along a route, you can preview your original route with one or more child care providers added to it.

After clicking on a provider pin or name to open the detailed information, click on the blue “Add Provider to Route” button. The map view will refresh with the provider added, and the Route tab displays updated distance and estimated route time information.

See the screenshot to the right for an example of how the sidebar updates time and distance when you add a provider to the route.

Route	List	Route	List
A	2903 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA Point A	A	2903 Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA Point A
	↓		↓
B	1907 Carpenter Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA Point B	B	1907 Carpenter Avenue, Des Moines, IA, USA Point B
	↓		↓
C	321 East 12th Street, Des Moines, IA, USA Point C	C	321 East 12th Street, Des Moines, IA, USA ✗ Point C
	↓		↓
	Trip Time: 12 minutes (5.1 miles)	D	321 East 12th Street, Des Moines, IA, USA Point D
			↓
			Trip Time: 16 minutes (5.3 miles)

To remove the provider from the route, click on the red ✗ next to the provider’s name on the Route tab of the sidebar.

Filtering Results

You can further refine search results using filters located in the bar above the map.

Start Over

Age Categories >

Provider Schedule >

CCA Status >

IQ4K Levels >

Type of Care >

Age Categories

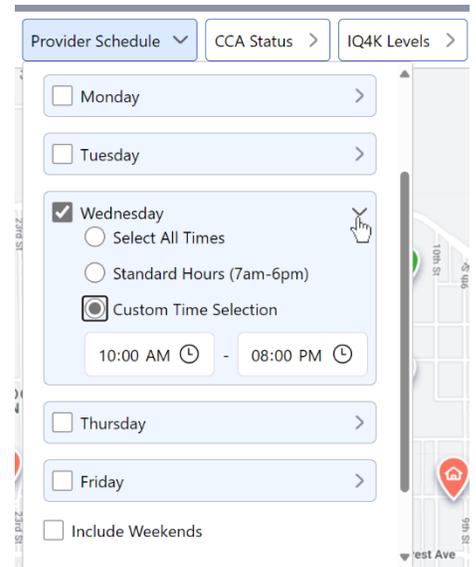
This filter identifies child care providers based on openings they have for the selected child age groups.

- To set this filter, click on the “Age Categories” box, and then click the **+** or **-** buttons to indicate the number of children in each age category needing child care.
- Click “Apply,” and the results on the map update based on your needs.

Provider Schedule

This filter identifies providers by the time slots that they offer child care with consideration to both hours of the day and days of the week.

- To set this filter, click on the “Provider Schedule” box to open the dropdown menu.
- This filter defaults to having every weekday selected – click the check box to uncheck the days that you *do not need* child care.
- This filter also defaults to displaying providers with *any availability* on the selected days.
 - To further refine this, click the arrow next to each day and either select “Standard Hours (7am – 6pm)” or select “Custom Time Selection” and enter times in the boxes by either typing in the boxes or click the clock icon to open a dropdown menu.
- Then, check the “Include Weekends” box if you need weekend child care.
- Finally, scroll down in the dropdown menu and click the blue “Apply” button to apply the filter.



The screenshot shows a filter interface for 'Provider Schedule'. At the top, there are three tabs: 'Provider Schedule' (selected), 'CCA Status', and 'IQ4K Levels'. Below the tabs, there are five days listed: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. Each day has a checkbox and a right-pointing arrow. The Wednesday entry is expanded, showing three radio button options: 'Select All Times', 'Standard Hours (7am-6pm)', and 'Custom Time Selection'. The 'Custom Time Selection' option is selected, and a time range of 10:00 AM to 08:00 PM is displayed. Below the time range, there are two clock icons. At the bottom of the filter, there is a checkbox labeled 'Include Weekends'.

CCA Status

Users can filter providers by CCA Status – whether the provider accepts children on the Child Care Assistance Program. Find additional information about Iowa’s Child Care Assistance Program here: [Child Care Assistance \(iowa.gov\)](https://www.iowa.gov/child-care-assistance)

- This filter defaults to displaying all providers, regardless of their CCA Status.
- To adjust this, click on the “CCA Status” box to open the dropdown menu and click the boxes to select only the desired option.
- Click the blue “Apply” button to apply the filter.

IQ4K® Levels

Users can filter providers that participate and have an IQ4K® level. Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K®) is Iowa’s voluntary child care program quality rating and improvement system. Find additional information about IQ4K® here: [Iowa Quality for Kids \(IQ4K®\)](#)

- This filter defaults to displaying all providers, regardless of their IQ4K® status.
- To adjust this, click on the “IQ4K® Level” box to open the dropdown menu and click the boxes to select only the desired option.
- Click the blue “Apply” button to apply the filter.

Type of Care

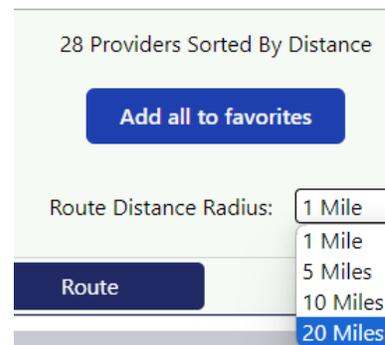
Users can filter providers by the type of care environment – between a “Center” (licensed child care center or preschool in a commercial space) or a “Home” (located in a residential setting – a registered child development home or a non-registered child care home with a Child Care Assistance Provider Agreement). Find additional information about the types of child care in Iowa here: [Child Care | Health & Human Services \(iowa.gov\)](#)

- This filter defaults to displaying all providers.
- To adjust this, click on the “Type of Care” box to open the dropdown menu and click the boxes to select only the desired option.
- Click the blue “Apply” button to apply the filter.

Route Distance Radius

If you are searching for providers along a route, you can also customize the distance you are willing to travel from your route for child care.

In the sidebar, use the “Route Distance Radius” dropdown to select between 1, 5, 10, or 20 miles, as seen to the right.



Removing Filters

Active filters are tinted light blue in the filter bar – to remove them, click each light blue filter box to open the dropdown menu and click the white “Clear Filter” button at the bottom of the menu.

Adding Favorites

Saving providers to your 'Favorites' allows you to easily compare and export a list of potential child care provider options.

Add providers to your 'Favorites' by clicking the star icon near the provider's name either from the provider list tab or on the provider detail screen, both on the right sidebar. Additionally, you can add all providers that meet your current filters by clicking the "Add All to Favorites" button in the top of the right sidebar.

Once selected, the color of the provider's star changes to yellow.

To view and compare all your favorites, click the "Favorites" button in the top right.

Compare Page

The Compare Page allows you to see providers you favorited in a grid for a side-by-side to comparison different characteristics. When completing a guided search, the Compare Page displays after clicking on the "Submit" button. When completing a search by route, click the "Favorites" button in the top right of the screen to display the Compare Page. See screenshot below.



The Compare Page has the providers' names and contact information and the following characteristics for an easy comparison. Providers with an IQ4K® level display first in the Compare Page.

- Type of Care
- CCA Status
- IQ4K® Level
- CACFP Participation
- Experience/Training Supporting Children with special needs
- Transportation Options
- Days/Hours of Operation
- Current Child Care Openings

To remove a provider from your Favorites, click the "X" in the top right of a provider column. The remaining providers adjust to the left. Alternatively, click the "Remove All Favorites" button to remove all favorited providers from your list and start over.

Favorited providers save to your internet browser but may be lost if you clear your browser history data. Write down your top provider options or download your favorited provider data

as a CSV file by clicking on the “Download Favorites” button in the top left of the screen – you can open this file in any spreadsheet software such as Microsoft Excel or Google Sheets.

Additionally, the Compare Page has a button (see below) that links to the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services’ [Child Care Compliance and Complaint reports](#). On this page, you can search for specific providers to see compliance and complaint reports associated with that provider. This information is useful to review when selecting a child care provider.

HHS Compliance and Complaint Reports