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## **Eco-Friendly for Healthy Children**

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The Monroe County United Ministries (MCUM) Childcare Program has been endorsed as an Eco-Health Child Care provider. To achieve this endorsement, a provider must meet at least 24 of [30 requirements](#) relating to pest prevention, air quality, chemical use, lead, mercury, furnishings, art supplies, plastics, playground equipment, radon, recycling, and education. MCUM's program met 25 of the 30 criteria by using integrated pest management, recycling batteries and fluorescent light bulbs, using non-toxic art supplies, enforcing a no-idling policy in the parking lot, forbidding aerosol sprays, screening toys for lead paint, etc.

More information about the endorsement is available at: <http://www.ecohealthychildcare.org/>. Only five childcare providers in Indiana have received this endorsement and MCUM is the only provider in Monroe County and the surrounding counties.

MCUM's Childcare Program had already been awarded five stars through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's 5-Star Environmental Recognition Program for Child Care Facilities: <http://www.in.gov/idem/health/2336.htm>

These endorsements are important to this program because the early years of a child's life are critical to their future health, development, and success. While we strive to prepare children for success in school, we want to provide the safest and healthiest environment possible for children.

Monroe County United Ministries provides affordable childcare for low-income, working families and serve children ages 2.5-6. This program currently has 84 children enrolled, with an additional 60 children on a waiting list. The program is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and is an Indiana licensed care center.

MCUM also provides basic needs assistance for households in financial crisis in the form of food, clothing, rent and utility assistance, hygiene products, and other basic items needed by local families striving to get back on their feet.