

Choosing Quality Child Care

As a parent, no decision you make will be more important, or more difficult, than choosing a child care situation that best meets your family's needs. We are committed to helping parents find answers to their questions regarding how to locate quality child care and other early care and education concerns.

Begin by visiting several child care homes and centers. On each visit, think about your first impression and:

Look

- Does the place look safe for your child?
- Do the caregivers/teachers enjoy talking and playing with children?
- Do they talk with each child at the child's eye level?
- Are there plenty of toys and learning materials within the child's reach?
- Count ratio of adult supervision to children

Listen

- Do the children sound happy and involved?
- Do the teacher's voices seem cheerful and patient?
- A place that's too quiet may mean not enough activity. A place that's too noisy may mean there is a lack of control.

Count

- Count the number of children in the group, then count the number of staff members caring for them. Obviously, the fewer the number of children to each adult, the more attention your child will receive. A small number of children per adult is most important for babies and younger children.

Child Care Checklist

Basics

- ☐ License is displayed.
- ☐ Required staffing ratios are met.
- ☐ Written policies are available (including discipline policy).
- ☐ Group size is small enough to allow individual attention.
- ☐ The hours meet my needs.

Physical Facility

- ☐ The room is bright, cheerful, and clean.
- ☐ Enough space is provided for activities.
- ☐ Children get things themselves.
- ☐ There are enough toys, paints, books, etc. for all children.
- ☐ Equipment (chairs, tables, sinks, toilets) is all child size and in good condition.

Staff

- ☐ Caregivers have worked there for a year or more.
- ☐ Caregivers appear to enjoy what they do.
- ☐ Positive discipline techniques are used.
- ☐ Children are treated as individuals.
- ☐ Caregivers comfort the children when needed.