








How to choose Safe & Quality Child Care



-  **LEARN** about child care programs in your community.
 -  **LOOK** for licensed programs in your area.
 -  **CREATE** a list of preferred child care programs to call.
 -  **TALK** to friends, neighbors and other parents.
 -  **THINK** about how you want your child to be treated and cared for.
 -  **COMMIT** to choosing quality child care!
-  Have qualified, trained and experienced staff
 -  Impact how children learn, think, develop and behave
 -  Promote social and emotional skills
 -  Encourage curiosity and cultivates a love of learning
 -  Prepare children for school
 -  Ensure an organized, clean and safe environment (inside and out)
 -  Provide proper adult-to-child ratios ensuring appropriate supervision



A quality child care program ensures a safe, fun environment where children can **PLAY, LEARN** and **LAUGH!**

All parents want to support their child's health, happiness and development. Choosing quality child care is an excellent way to do this!

Health and Safety Checklist

- ✓ Safe indoor and outdoor play areas?
- ✓ Safe, clean and organized classrooms and common areas?
- ✓ Safe highchairs, cribs, cots and crawling areas?
- ✓ Locked storage for items that are dangerous for children?
- ✓ Working smoke detectors?
- ✓ Enough age-appropriate toys and materials for children?
- ✓ Adequate supervision at all times?
- ✓ Washing hands when needed?
- ✓ Nutritious meals and snacks?
- ✓ A routine but flexible schedule?
- ✓ Enough care providers to give each child individual attention?

For more information:

Child Care Licensing: 1-800-543-7545

Parent Info: www.dss.virginia.gov/contact_us/dolp_district.pdf

Child Care Aware of Virginia: 1-866-481-1913

Virginia 2-1-1: www.211virginia.org or dial 2-1-1

Virginia Star Quality Initiative:

<http://www.smartbeginnings.org/home/star-quality-initiative/about-star-quality/aboutthevsqi.aspx>



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

www.dss.virginia.gov



When visiting the program, observe or ask:

- ▶ Is this program licensed?
- ▶ Is staff qualified, experienced and trained?
- ▶ What are the health and safety practices?
- ▶ What are the adult-to-child ratios?
- ▶ How does staff meet children's needs?
- ▶ Does staff help children solve problems?
- ▶ Are parents encouraged to be involved?
- ▶ How does the curriculum support play and learning?

Then ask yourself:

- ▶ Does staff seem kind, interested, patient and friendly?
- ▶ Do the children look happy, engaged and well cared for?
- ▶ Do I trust this person/program to meet the needs of my child?
- ▶ Will my child be comfortable here?
- ▶ Will this program support my child's learning and development?
- ▶ Did I talk to other parents about the program?

**Choosing quality child care
is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make.**