

Checklist

You know what is important to you and your family when choosing a child care. In addition to thinking about affordability and accessibility, it may help you to take along this checklist along when visiting sites.

What will my child do during the day?

- Are there planned activities that help my child learn?
- Quiet and active?
- Indoor and outdoor?
- Will my child have time each day for running, catching, climbing and throwing?
- Will my child have free play time?
- Is TV watching and computer games limited and appropriate?
- Is the space comfortable, organized, appealing, and child-friendly?

Is the rest time individualized for each child?

- Infants sleep on their own schedule
- Quiet activities for non-napping children
- Are there plenty of age-appropriate books?
- Are books available to children in their own language?
- Is there circle time, storytelling, or reading every day?
- Will my family's culture be respected in daily activities?

What will my child eat, and when?

- Is there a planned menu?
- Are meals and snacks balanced and healthy?
- Are children's food choices, appetites, and religious or cultural restrictions respected?
- What are the expectations about food brought from home?

Will my child thrive here?

- Are different cultures, ethnicities, and abilities valued?
- Do staff smile, talk to and listen to children frequently?
- Does this setting encourage creativity and age-appropriate independence?
- Do staff hold and cuddle with infants and toddlers often, including while feeding or changing diapers?
- Will the same people take care of my child regularly?
- Are children comforted when needed?
- Is the atmosphere bright, pleasant, and happy?
- What training and education do staff have that prepared them to help my child learn?
- Will my child have FUN?

Do children and providers wash hands:

- After toileting?
- After blowing noses?
- After changing diapers?
- Before eating or handling food?
- When coming back from outdoor play?

Is age-appropriate discipline used?

- Do staff set limits that are reasonable, clear, consistent and age-appropriate?
- Do staff use calm voices when talking with children?
- Do staff redirect children to other activities if there's a conflict?
- What happens when children hit, bite, or bully other children?
- Do I agree with the discipline policy?

Will my child be safe and healthy in this setting?

- Are there enough staff members to give attention to all of the children?
- Are the toys and equipment safe and age-appropriate?
- Is a staff member trained in CPR and first aid present at all times?
- Is the licensed space child-proofed (cleaning supplies up high, electrical outlets covered, medicines locked up)?
- Are there regular fire drills?
- Does the outdoor play area feel safe?
- Do I feel secure with the people who will be caring for my child?
- If my child is school-aged, is there a plan for getting him/her to and from school safely?
- Are there guidelines regarding illness?
- How often are diapers changed?
- Is there a plan for contacting parents in case of an emergency?

How are child care providers here supported?

- Do staff have opportunities for training and continuing education?
- Do staff have break time?
- Are staff encouraged to share their ideas on activities and program planning?
- Do staff have time to plan activities?

How are parents included in the child care program?

- Am I encouraged to visit any time?
- Is there a way for me to watch activities?
- Am I encouraged to spend time with my child as a guest or as a volunteer?
- How will I hear about my child's day?
- Are there provider-parent meetings?
- Are there chances for families to get to know one another and staff?
- Do I feel respected as my child's first and more important teacher?