

Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider



1. Interview Caregivers

Call First

Ask.....

- ✓ Is there an opening for my child?
- ✓ What hours and days are you open and where are you located?
- ✓ How much does care cost? Is financial assistance available?
- ✓ How many children are in your care? What age groups do you serve?
- ✓ Do you provide transportation?
- ✓ Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- ✓ Do you have a license, accreditation, or other certification?
- ✓ When can I come to visit?

Visit Next (Visit more than once, stay as long as you can!)

Look for.....

- ✓ Responsive, nurturing, warm interactions between caregiver and children.
- ✓ Children who are happily involved in daily activities and comfortable with their caregiver.
- ✓ A clean, safe, and healthy indoor and outdoor environment, especially napping, eating and toileting areas.
- ✓ A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks, and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting and which will contribute to their growth and development.
- ✓ Children getting individual attention.

Ask.....

- ✓ Can I visit at any time?
- ✓ How do you handle discipline?
- ✓ What do you do if a child is sick?
- ✓ What would you do in case of an emergency?
- ✓ Are all children and staff required to be immunized?
- ✓ Do you have a substitute or back-up caregiver?
- ✓ Where do children nap? Do you know that babies should go to sleep on their backs?
- ✓ What training have you (and other staff/substitutes) had?
- ✓ May I see a copy of your license or other certification?
- ✓ May I have a list of parents (current and former) who have used your care?



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2. Check References

Ask other parents.....

- ✓ Was the caregiver reliable on a daily basis?
- ✓ How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- ✓ Did your child enjoy the child care experience?
- ✓ How did the caregiver respond to you as a parent?
- ✓ Was the caregiver respectful of your values and culture?
- ✓ Would you recommend the caregiver without reservation?
- ✓ If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Ask the local child care resource and referral program or licensing office.....

- ✓ What regulations should child care providers meet in my area?
- ✓ Is there a record of complaints about the child care provider I am considering and how do I find out about it?

3. Make the Decision for Quality Care

From what you heard and saw, ask yourself.....

- ✓ Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- ✓ Which caregiver can meet the special needs of my child?
- ✓ Are the caregiver's values compatible with my family's values?
- ✓ Is the child care available and affordable according to my family's needs and resources?
- ✓ Do I feel good about my decision?

4. Stay Involved

Ask yourself.....

- ✓ How can I arrange my schedule so that I can...
 - talk to my caregiver every day?
 - talk to my child every day about how the day went?
 - visit and observe my child in care at different times of the day?
 - be involved in my child's activities?
- ✓ How can I work with my caregiver to resolve issues and concerns that may arise?
- ✓ How do I keep informed about my child's growth and development while in care?
- ✓ How can I promote good working conditions for my child care provider?
- ✓ How can I network with other parents?

These steps are only the beginning. Gather as much information as possible to help you find the best care for your child. To find the Child Care Resources and Referral Program nearest you, call Child Care Aware: (800) 424-2246. For more complete guidelines on health and safety in child care, call the National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care: (800) 598-KIDS (5437).