

Quality Child Care Checklist

Choosing a child care center is a very important decision for every family. Making comparisons between different facilities and programs should be done. In order to find a high quality Early Childhood Program, utilize this checklist. Ask the centers that you visit to answer the following questions. Also, observe the classrooms at each location. Select a center that meets your family's needs.

Caregivers/Teachers:

1. Are caregivers/teachers trained in Early Childhood Education? CPR? First Aid?
2. Are staff-to-child ratios met?
3. Are parents informed and questions answered on a daily basis?
4. Are children greeted when they arrive?
5. Do the caregivers get down on each child's level to speak with the child?
6. Do the caregivers genuinely seem to enjoy working with the children?
7. Are children's needs quickly met?
8. Do the children in the programs seem relaxed and happy?
9. Are positive guidance techniques followed?
10. Do caregivers respect individual difference among the children?
11. Are thorough criminal background checks done for each staff member?
Reference checks?

Activities:

1. Is there a regular daily schedule including both indoor and outdoor activities and a rest period?
2. Are activities geared for different developmental levels?
3. Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children?
4. Are there field trips for the preschool and school-age children?
5. Are there materials that can be used to develop fine motor skills? Gross motor skills? Imagination? Creativity? Simple science concepts? Language skills? Interpersonal skills?
6. When children are transported in center vehicles, are seat belts or age-appropriate car seats used?

Nutrition:

1. Is the food preparation area clean and sanitary?
2. Are menus posted in advance providing nutritionally balanced meals and snacks?
3. Do the staff and children wash hands before eating and preparing meals?
4. Are accommodations made for food allergies, intolerances, etc.?
5. Are family style meals served and socialization encouraged?

Physical Environment/Safety:

1. Is the atmosphere bright, cheerful and inviting to children?
2. Are games, toys, etc., accessible to children?
3. Are there different areas for resting, quiet play, and active play?
4. Are the play areas clean and large enough so children can move freely and safely?
5. Is play equipment (indoor and outdoor) sturdy and in good repair?
6. Are bathrooms clean, sanitary and accessible to children?
7. Is there adequate heat, ventilation, and lighting?
8. Are emergency telephone numbers posted by the telephones?
9. Are fire safety drills practiced? Tornado drills?
10. Are unused electrical sockets covered with safety caps?
11. Are potentially dangerous items stored away from children?
12. Is there a strict policy in place for releasing children to people other than their parents/guardians?
13. Do caregivers wash hands after diapering, toileting, wiping noses, and when handling food?
14. Is there a policy regarding illness and administering medication?



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CHILD CARE FROM THE HEART