

When You Consider Childcare Centers

Childcare centers offer you a wide range of activities and programs. They can be run by private individuals, corporations, or community or religious organizations. All childcare centers must meet minimum government standards regulated by a local agency. It is important that you know the standards set by your local government and evaluate the level of care available in each center you are considering.

Use these questions to help choose a daycare center. Be sure to take your time and carefully evaluate each center you visit.

First Impressions

Did you get a good feeling about the director and staff?

- Yes
 No

Were your first thoughts positive?

- Yes
 No

Did you feel welcome and is there an open-door policy?

- Yes
 No

Physical Setting

Is the center clean, well lighted, heated, and ventilated with ample space for each child?

- Yes
 No

Are all rooms clean, dry, and odor-free?

- Yes
 No

Do the children sleep in cribs or on cots?

- Cribs
 Cots

How often are the linens cleaned?

Is there a fenced outdoor space with a variety of equipment available?

- Yes
 No

Do the children go outdoors daily as weather permits?

- Yes
 No

What are the evacuation procedures?

Are evacuation procedures posted?

- Yes
 No

Does the equipment (toys and supplies) appear to be in good working condition?

- Yes
 No

Are there fire extinguishers and smoke detectors in the children's rooms?

- Yes
 No

Is the kitchen sanitary?

- Yes
 No

Is a dishwasher available?

- Yes
- No

Staff

Does the staff seem to enjoy what they are doing and treat the children with respect?

- Yes
- No

What are the credentials of the director?

Does the director have management experience?

- Yes
- No

What is the professional background of the staff?

Are there regularly scheduled staff meetings and opportunities for staff training?

- Yes
- No

Is staff attendance regular and turnover minimal?

- Yes
- No

How long has the staff been there?

Are the caregivers trained in CPR and first aid?

- Yes
- No

How does the teacher discipline?

Program

Is the center licensed?

- Yes
- No

Is the center accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?

- Yes
- No

Does the center have written policies and procedures for parents and staff?

- Yes
- No

What are the center's health and safety policies?

Are all illnesses and accidents reported immediately to parents?

- Yes
- No

What are the fees? When are they due?

What holidays does this program observe (When does it close)?

- Yes
- No

Are the children signed in and out daily?

- Yes
- No

Are there written enrollment forms and contracts?

- Yes
- No

Can parents be involved in the program?

- Yes
- No