



Tips for Selecting Quality Child Care

Finding Quality Care

As a parent, choosing a quality childcare environment is one of the most difficult decisions you'll make. You want peace of mind, knowing your child is in a healthy, safe and nurturing environment while you're away and that he/she is being treated with respect and affection. Quality care depends on caregivers and parents working together. Finding quality care is essential for your child and your family. Here are some useful tips to help you find that quality care:

Phone Interview Questions

- Do you have an opening for _____ (age of your child)?
- What ages of children do you provide care for?
- What are your hours?
- How long have you been in business?
- How many children do you have enrolled now?
- What is your childcare philosophy?
- What sort of activities do the children do on a typical day?
- Do you participate in the Child Care Food Program?
- What are your fees and what do they include?
- May I make an appointment to visit your program?

If you feel comfortable with the answers given by the provider on the phone, we recommend that you visit the site with your child before agreeing to enroll.

Questions to Ask When Visiting a Child Care Site

It is the parent's responsibility to visit the childcare site before placing a child in care. Each child is unique. It is important to find the best childcare situation to meet your child's needs.

The following are questions to ask when looking at a childcare setting:

- How many teachers/adults are there?
- What would a typical day be like for my child/children?
- How do you meet the needs of different ages?

- How do you handle discipline?
- Will children be able to choose what activity to join and when?
- Is TV or other media used? How much, and which programs?
- For a Family Child Care Home or TrustLine provider-Who else will be in your home during the day?
- Do you have a parent handbook that describes philosophy, rules, fees, and policies?
- Do you have a contract?
- May I see a copy of your license?
- Do you close for holidays or vacations? Which ones? Are they paid?
- Can my school-age child be accommodated during school vacations?
- Do you take field trips? If so, how are children transported?
- Are Caregivers/Teachers trained in CPR, First Aid, and Early Childhood Education?
- How can parents become involved in the Family Child Care Home or Center?
- Can you give me the names of two or three parents to call for references?

Questions to Ask References

- Would you choose this Center or Family Child Care Home again?
- What did you like most and least about the program?

Things to Look for When You Visit

- Does the provider/staff pay individual attention to each child?
- Does the provider/staff play and talk with the children?
- Does the environment appear safe?
- Does the facility have smoke detectors, a fire extinguisher, and marked safety exits?
- Are outlets and wires protected?
- Are all cabinet doors and all harmful chemicals secured?
- Is there enough room inside and outside for children to play comfortably?
- Is there a variety of toys and activities your child would enjoy?
- Do the children look and sound happy?
- Are the provider/staff voices loud enough to be heard, but not overpowering?

Making the Final Choice

When you are finished with your visits, think about all the things you've seen and learned. Think about whether the caregiver meets your standards in the areas that are most important to you and your family. If you have doubts, continue to interview and visit additional providers.

Preparing Your Child

Once you've chosen care for your child, you will want to prepare your child and yourself for this important transition in your lives.

When a child first enters care, anything you can do to ease the stress of the initial separation will help your child adjust and develop close relationships with the adults and children at the home or center. You and your caregiver, working as a team, can create a healthy transition and adjustment for your child to the new environment.

While adjusting to the transition, visit the provider again before actually starting your child there. Focus on the following:

- Don't rush your child, spend plenty of time in the morning getting ready for child care.
- Allow your child to bring a special blanket, stuffed animal, or picture of the family to help them feel more secure about leaving home.
- Be sure to tell your child about child care so they are not surprised by the new arrangement. Encourage them to tell you how they feel before and after the child care visit.
- Talk with your caregiver about your plan to prepare for separation from your child. Ask for their support and suggestions.

For additional information on choosing child care, please contact our office. We'd be happy to mail you more information on choosing child care or share with you the many resources available through our agency.

Choices for Children
100 Foothill Rd., Suite D-6
Markleeville, CA 96120
(530) 694-2129
1-877-694-2129