

Tips for Selecting Quality Child Care

Choosing a quality early care and education program is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent or guardian. You want to ensure that your child is in a healthy and safe setting that nurtures all areas of development. High quality early care and education programs foster social-emotional development, school readiness, and achievement which contribute to over-all success in life.

Oliver's Law (AB 458 Zettel), requires that child care resource and referral and alternative payment programs advise every person who requests a child care referral of his or her right to licensing information. All licensed child care facilities are required to maintain licensing information and make it accessible upon request. Also anyone can access public files pertaining to licensed facilities from Community Care Licensing (CCL).

To get a complete licensing history call **Community Care Licensing at (916) 263-5744**. You must leave a message with the providers' name and address **or** facility number and your contact information. CCL will call you back within 24 hours. The public record will contain the results of unannounced visits and any complaints. Not all complaints or violations are equal. Some complaints may be unsubstantiated or of a minor nature and are easily remedied. Look for a history or a pattern of complaints against a provider to help you make an informed choice.

Finding Quality Care - Providers in this referral were selected using the criteria supplied by you. These are referrals not recommendations. Each family has unique child care needs and you know your child best. You should always visit providers before deciding on child care. Below is a list of possible questions you can ask during your initial phone call and/or when you visit.

- Do you have an opening for my child?
- What are your hours of operation?
- What ages of children do you care for and how many are currently enrolled?
- How many teachers or adults are there?
- How long have you been in business?
- What are your fees and what do they include? I.e. meals, snacks, etc...
- What would a typical day be like for my child?
- What kinds of activities do you do?
- 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?
- How is TV used? (The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV for children under 2 and no more than one hour a day for children over 2 years. This is the total hours per day including at home.)
- 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, fees, policies and procedures?
- Do you have a contract?
- 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 currently certified in CPR & First Aid; early childhood education training?
- 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 by talking and playing with them?
- Are provider/staff interactions with children respectful and warm?
- Does the facility look safe?
 - Smoke detectors, a fire extinguisher, and marked safety exits
 - Outlets and wires protected
 - Cabinet doors and harmful chemicals secured
- Is there enough room inside and outside for children to play comfortably?
- Are there a variety of toys and activities your child would enjoy?
- Do the children look and sound happy and does the environment seem inviting?
- Did you see a copy of the license?

Preparing Your Child - When you have selected a provider or center who meets your family needs and standards for quality, you are ready to prepare your child for this important transition. 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 Family Child Care Home or Center. You and your caregiver, working as a team, can create a healthy transition and adjustment to the new environment.

- Visit the home or center with your child prior to leaving them.
- Allow plenty of time in the morning to getting ready for child care.
- Bring a special blanket, stuffed animal, or picture of the family to help them feel more secure.
- 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.
- Ask the caregiver or teacher for any suggestions about easing the separation.

Choices for Children - Uniform Complaint Procedure

It is the intent of Choices for Children to fully comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Individuals, agencies, organizations, students and interested third parties have the right to file a complaint regarding Choices for Children's alleged violation of federal and/or state laws. This includes allegations of unlawful discrimination (Ed Code sections 200 and 220 and Government Code section 11135 and the Americans with Disabilities Act) in any program or activity funded directly by the State or receiving federal or state financial assistance. Complaints must be signed and filed in writing with the State Department of Education.

Child Development Division
 Complaint Coordinator
 1430 N Street, Suite 3410
 Sacramento, CA 95814

If the complainant is not satisfied with the final written decision of the California Department of Education, remedies may be available in federal or state court. The complainant should seek the advice of an attorney of his/her choosing in this event. A complainant filing a written complaint alleging violations of prohibited discrimination may also pursue civil law remedies, including, but not limited to, injunctions, restraining orders, or other remedies or orders.

Legal Reference: 5 CCR, Chapter 5.1. Uniform Complaint Procedures