

Child Care Checklist

How to evaluate child care settings

Research has identified a few specific items that may help you to detect the level of quality in the child care facilities that you interview for your child's care. Use this checklist as a guide to help you through this important decision making process.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- Proper equipment will reduce safety or health risks
 - ☐ Playground equipment is in good condition.
 - ☐ Sufficient sand, woodchips or other approved padded material are underneath playground equipment.
 - ☐ The playground is fenced to at least 4 feet high.
 - ☐ The playground is checked daily for dangerous objects.
 - ☐ Indoor toys and equipment are in good condition.
 - ☐ Safety gates are in place if necessary.
 - ☐ Electrical outlets are covered with safety caps.
 - ☐ First aid kits are easily accessible by adults.
 - ☐ Working smoke detectors are in every room of the facility.
 - ☐ Radiators or heaters are covered.
- Proper storage and use of medicines and cleaning supplies will reduce accidental poisoning
 - ☐ Medicines are properly labeled and out of the reach of children.
 - ☐ Adults are trained in giving medicines and are keeping records of what is given to whom.
 - ☐ Cleaning supplies and poisonous materials are locked and out of reach of children.
- Clean environments reduce illness and spread of germs
 - ☐ Adults and children wash their hands after using the bathroom.
 - ☐ Adults and children wash their hands before eating.
 - ☐ Adults wash their hands before and after diapering.
 - ☐ Diaper-changing tables are cleaned and disinfected with a bleach solution after each use.
 - ☐ There is good lighting, proper heat and cooling, and is well ventilated.

- Nutritious meals and snacks improve the child's health and well-being.
 - ☐ Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines are followed for preparing and serving meals and snacks.
 - ☐ Food preparation safety procedures are followed.
 - ☐ Meal and snack times are pleasant and relaxing.
- Constant supervision in a caring environment give children a sense of safety and security.
 - ☐ Children are watched at all times, even when sleeping.
 - ☐ Children are greeted warmly.
 - ☐ Attention is given to each individual child.
 - ☐ Adults handle children's behavior in positive ways.
 - ☐ There are sufficient adults to care for the number of children in attendance. Licensing requirements for the child per adult ratio are met.
 - ☐ All adults have been trained on preventing child abuse, recognizing potential signs of abuse, and know the requirements for reporting suspected abuse?
- Having plans in place for injury or disaster help to prevent traumatic consequences
 - ☐ Plans are in place to notify families in case of injury or disaster.
 - ☐ Plans are in place to care for children in case of a child's or an adult's injury.
 - ☐ Plans are in place in case of fire or other disaster, including flood, tornado, earthquake, intrusion, or terrorism.
 - ☐ There is at least one alternate exit in case of fire.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Supervision and guidance keep children safe while learning
 - ☐ Lesson plans are posted for everyone to see.
 - ☐ Plans include field trips and/or interesting visitors.
 - ☐ The caregiver talks, encourages conversation, describes what's going on and reads aloud to children.
 - ☐ Positive guidance techniques are used.
- Children need to develop socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically.
 - ☐ The environment is arranged with specific areas for blocks, art, books, dress-up, table toys, puzzles, drawing, painting, crafts, pretend play, music, puppets and other age and developmentally appropriate activities.

- ☐ Toys and materials are available and easy to access at all times.
- ☐ Children are given opportunities to be creative and actively involved.
- ☐ Children learn while they play.
- ☐ There is an abundance of age and developmentally appropriate toys and activities available both indoors and outdoors.
- ☐ There are times and places available to play quietly and to play actively.
- ☐ There are times and places available to play alone and to play with others.

STAFF TRAINING

- Knowing and understand child development and how best to work with children is an important aspect of caring for children.
 - ☐ The director of a Child Care Center has a college degree and at least two years of experience in the early childhood field.
 - ☐ Staff at a Child Care Center have at least a CDA (Child Development Associate) and one year of experience working with children.
 - ☐ A Family Child Care provider has at least a high school diploma and takes continuing education courses or in-service each year to exceed the minimum requirement for licensing.
 - ☐ All staff have had specific training on child development.
 - ☐ All staff have a current certification in First Aid and CPR.
 - ☐ All staff have been trained on child abuse prevention and how to recognize and report suspected abuse.
 - ☐ A continuing education plan is in place for each staff at the facility.
- Care that is right for each child's age and skill levels is important for the child's development
 - ☐ The children are treated with respect and patience.
 - ☐ All staff are relaxed and flexible.
 - ☐ All staff use a calm voice and give individual attention to each child.
 - ☐ All staff listen attentively to each child, responding with kindness and encouragement.
- Forming a bond with the provider will help children feel safe and loved.
 - ☐ Staff turnover is low so that children will feel a bond with the caregiver.
 - ☐ Staff have a sense of humor.

PARENT POLICIES

- Parent involvement is important to the child's feeling of belonging
 - ☐ Parents or guardians of the child are encouraged to drop in at any time their child is in care
 - ☐ Written policies are given to each family
 - ☐ Families are encouraged to participate in activities
- Parent involvement is important to meet the specific needs of the child
 - ☐ Formal meetings with each family are scheduled each year
 - ☐ Informal meetings are encouraged throughout the year to review the needs of the child
 - ☐ Parents are encouraged to ask questions

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

- Programs have passed standards for health and safety, ratios, and equipment
 - ☐ All enrolled children have records of required shots.
 - ☐ All adults have national background checks.
- Programs that are accredited have passed national standards for providing quality care
 - ☐ The child care facility is accredited by a national organization.
 - ☐ Written personnel policies and job descriptions are available for Child Care Center staff.
 - ☐ Child Care Center staff are formally evaluated once each year.
 - ☐ Parents are surveyed annually about their satisfaction with the care of their child and services of the facility.
 - ☐ Staff are surveyed annually about their employment experiences.