

Identifying Quality in child Care

Look, listen and ask:



- Are families and children welcomed, and are children greeted in a loving, respected way?
- Is the overall atmosphere bright, cheerful and child-focused, without being overwhelming?
- Do the child care staff **really listen** to you, and see your child and every child as a unique and special individual?
- Are the caregivers and teaching practices responsive to differences in children's abilities, interests and experiences?
- Are the majority of planned developmental activities individualized or in small groups?
- Are child care personnel willing to work with you and develop individual goals and plans to achieve them?
- Does the program accept children who are not yet walking or toilet-trained?
- Are caregivers trained and experienced in CPR, first aid, early childhood education and special needs?
- Are therapeutic services such as OT, PT and speech therapy provided on site, if possible?
- Are daily, weekly, monthly and special event schedules shared with families?
- Do child care personnel perform child and family advocacy functions for you if necessary?
- Is communication open between staff and parents? Are caregivers always ready to respond?
- Is the facility safe, secure and physically accessible (i.e., ramps, outside play area, bathrooms)?
- Is the program licensed and/or accredited?
- Are learning materials and toys sufficient, safe, clean and within reach of all children?
- Are the sounds of children predominantly happy? Does it appear the children and adults enjoy being together?
- Is there a daily balance of active and quiet activities? Are they right for each ability and age level?
- Do learning materials, books and pictures reflect diversity, including children with special needs?

Ask the director or family child care provider

Remember to think about your child's needs, your family's needs and the needs of the other children and families.

- Are you aware of national quality standards?
- Is the program licensed by the state?
- Are you accredited or working toward national accreditation?
- Do you have a philosophy or mission statement that I could see?
- May I have a copy of your policies and/or parent handbook?
- What are your guidelines and procedures for involving children with special needs?
- How are families involved in the program?
- How will my child be introduced to the adults and other children?
- How do you handle sick children?
- Do you have an orientation for new families?
- What do you consider "Special Needs"?
- What educational opportunities are provided for you and your team?
- How do you handle transitions?
- How is discipline administered?

Take this page with you as you look for a program for your child. Ask questions and feel free to take notes about what you see and hear.