



# Resources for Child Caring

*Raising the standard of care for children*

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN VISITING A CHILDCARE CENTER

It is strongly recommended that you make an appointment and visit the childcare center in person to observe the teachers and children before you enroll your child. It is also a good idea to bring your child along. Ask to see any written information describing the program policies, health forms, payment contracts, fee schedules, sample menus, etc. Look to see if the environment is safe for your child and if the program is designed to enrich your child's development and growth. Talk to the teachers about how you would like your child to be treated while at the center.

### *ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY*

- ◆ Are cleaning solutions and other hazardous materials kept away from children in a secured area?
- ◆ Does the facility and classroom seem properly ventilated?
- ◆ Are children kept out of potentially unsafe areas such as the kitchen and laundry room?
- ◆ Do the classrooms and surrounding play areas appear to be clean?
- ◆ Do toys appear to be age-appropriate and in good shape without broken pieces and sharp edges?
- ◆ Do the teachers smile at the children and speak to them in an acceptable tone of voice?
- ◆ Does the outside play area seem age-appropriate and safe? Is it fenced in and properly secured so children cannot wander off?
- ◆ Do teachers appear to be responding to the needs of the children in an appropriate fashion?
- ◆ Are menus posted where parents can see what types of food are being served?
- ◆ Is there a daily schedule posted in the classrooms?
- ◆ Is there an isolation area for children who become ill during the day?

**WHAT TO LOOK FOR  
WHEN VISITING A CHILDCARE CENTER, continued**

***SPECIAL QUESTIONS***

Ask all caregivers the following questions when appropriate:

**FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS**

- ◆ What records do you keep on diapering, eating, and sleeping?
- ◆ Do you provide food or do I need to bring it?
- ◆ Do you provide diapers?
- ◆ How often do they go outdoors?
- ◆ How much time do they spend in cribs or playpens?
- ◆ Are children held while they are fed?
- ◆ What type of stimulation do the children receive?
- ◆ What do you do to develop speech and language? Is music used?
- ◆ How do you assist children with anxieties related to separation?

**FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

- ◆ Do you have age-appropriate equipment?
- ◆ How much outdoor play is each child allowed?
- ◆ Do you take field trips with the children?
- ◆ Will you test my child for school readiness?



**WHAT TO LOOK FOR  
WHEN VISITING A CHILDCARE CENTER, continued**

**FOR SCHOOLAGE CHILDREN**

- ◆ What type of recreational activities will my child be engaged in and does my child have to participate? What alternatives are available if he/she does not?
- ◆ Do you provide transportation to or from school? Do you allow the child to walk or ride a bike to the child care facility from school?
- ◆ Do you help with homework or other studies?
- ◆ Are your activities well planned and constructive?
- ◆ Will you provide care over vacation periods?
- ◆ Do the children help determine the rules and make choices in activities?

**FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

- ◆ Are the groups small enough to provide attention to my child's individual needs?
- ◆ Do you have special equipment for my child?
- ◆ Have you had experience with a child who has special needs?
- ◆ Can you handle the emotional needs of my child and help the other children understand his/her needs?
- ◆ Has the staff had special training and will they engage in training in the future?
- ◆ Are there support services or therapists available?

(7/2008, RA 8/2006)

