

Use the following as a checklist of things to look for and ask about when you are choosing an early care and education program.

The Caregivers

- Interact with children often
- Are available, responsive, friendly and positive
- Treat all children with respect and consideration
- Help children develop responsibility, self-control, turn-taking and problem solving
- Use positive techniques to guide children's behavior
- Offer different kinds of experiences
- Are at least 18 years old
- Are high school graduates and have some early childhood training
- Provide direct supervision at all times
- Have current CPR and First Aid training
- Provide sound management of the program
- Are committed to the profession

The Environment or the Program

- Is based on child development theories and the individual child's interests
- Includes all children regardless of ability or need
- Offers a balanced daily schedule - quiet/active; inside/outside; neat/messy
- Is flexible with scheduling
- Provides for independence, stimulation and security
- Allows children to choose their own activities most of the time
- Has sufficient materials to support the activities
- Is clean, safe and attractive
- Provides a space for each child's belongings
- Offers a large enough space to meet the needs of the children
- Is comfortable and well organized
- Follows all health and safety requirements
- Is cleaned daily
- Provides meals and snacks as recommended by the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The Partnership with Parents

- Provides information about the facility's philosophy and goals for children
- Has a process for sharing information about the program at the initial meeting
- Encourages all adults to listen and talk to each other about the child
- Has an "open-door" policy - parents are welcome any time
- Includes sharing information daily about the child
- Is based on trust and respect
- Caregivers and parents work together to make decisions about the child's growth and development
- Communicates the program's health policies to all families
- Program policies and procedures are responsive to the needs of the children and families in the community