

Quality Child Care Checklist



Use this checklist to keep track of the answers you receive during your search for high-quality child care programs. It's broken down into several categories covering a wide range of topics, from general program information to the needs of your child.

Step 1: Complete the Program Information Chart below for each program you visit.

Step 2: Use the checklist as you visit each program. Next to each question on the checklist are three numbered bubbles, which match the program numbers in the Program Information Chart below.

Step 3: As you ask questions about each program, check the appropriate numbered bubble when the answer is "Yes." Leave the bubble unchecked if the answer is "No."

Step 4: When you have visited all the programs you want to see, compare the answers and determine which program is best for your family.

PROGRAM INFORMATION CHART	
Program 1	
Contact	Phone
Hours	
Fees	Star Rating
Referral #1	Phone
Referral #2	Phone
Program 2	
Contact	Phone
Hours	
Fees	Star Rating
Referral #1	Phone
Referral #2	Phone
Program 3	
Contact	Phone
Hours	
Fees	Star Rating
Referral #1	Phone
Referral #2	Phone



Setting

Do children have a place to store personal belongings?	1	2	3
Are toys on low shelves within reach of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers?	1	2	3
Are the furnishings the right size for the ages of the children in the program?	1	2	3
Is the children's work displayed at their eye level?	1	2	3
Are there science/sensory activities that encourage the children to experiment and observe?	1	2	3
Does the equipment (such as low slides, push/pull toys, low climbing equipment) promote physical activity?	1	2	3
Is there sufficient floor space in infant classrooms for cribs, and for infants to crawl and engage in activities?	1	2	3
Are learning centers and planned activities available outside?	1	2	3
Are there activity areas that allow for different types of play (such as a housekeeping area, book corner, blocks)?	1	2	3
Is the program accessible to and does it meet the needs of children with disabilities?	1	2	3



Programming

Are learning goals set for each child?	1	2	3
Is there a curriculum that is followed?	1	2	3
Are infant activities (such as play, meals, or napping) individualized?	1	2	3
Is a daily record kept on feeding, naps, and diaper changes?	1	2	3
Is the children's work creative and individualized as opposed to looking the same?	1	2	3
Is there a variety of clean, developmentally appropriate materials for the children, both indoors and outdoors?	1	2	3
Are there strollers or buggies to make outdoor visits easier?	1	2	3
Is there a variety of toys?	1	2	3
Are duplicates of toys available?	1	2	3
Is there a record, CD, or tape player?	1	2	3



Health & Safety

Are nutritious snacks and meals planned and served? Is there a menu posted for parents?	1	2	3
Does the program encourage vigorous play and plan physical activities?	1	2	3
Are foods, bottles, and medicines labeled with the child's name and date and stored safely and appropriately?	1	2	3
Is there a staff member trained in first aid/CPR at the facility at all times? Is there a first aid kit?	1	2	3
Do staff follow health precautions (using gloves and washing their hands and children's hands frequently)?	1	2	3
Are the toys cleaned daily and/or as needed?	1	2	3
Can the diaper-changing surface be easily cleaned?	1	2	3
Are there clean and easily accessible bathrooms?	1	2	3
Is the outdoor play area fenced?	1	2	3
Are the children able to move between indoor and outdoor areas safely and easily?	1	2	3
Are the program's indoor and outdoor areas safe, free from hazards, and large enough for easy movement?	1	2	3
Are there separate outdoor areas for infants that include a variety of safe equipment?	1	2	3
Are electrical plugs and radiators covered and/or protected?	1	2	3
Are there functioning smoke and carbon monoxide detectors?	1	2	3
Are fire drills conducted on a monthly basis?	1	2	3
Are safety gates used properly?	1	2	3



Staff

Does a staff member greet children warmly when they arrive?	1	2	3
Do staff seem to like and relate well to the children, families, and each other?	1	2	3
Do staff use a warm and pleasant tone of voice with the children?	1	2	3
Do staff welcome questions and share information with families?	1	2	3
Do staff discipline the children in a caring, consistent, and calm manner?	1	2	3
Do staff encourage the children to talk to teachers and one another?	1	2	3
Do staff respond to children's individual needs? Do they provide one-on-one attention?	1	2	3
Do staff encourage self-help and independence?	1	2	3
Are staff actively involved with the children (i.e. on the floor with infants)?	1	2	3
Are staff members required to have special training in early education and child development?	1	2	3
Is there an in-service training program and/or other opportunities for continuous staff training?	1	2	3
Does your child's prospective teacher have a degree from a college or university?	1	2	3
Have the majority of staff members worked at the program for more than two years?	1	2	3
Has your child's prospective teacher worked at the program for more than two years?	1	2	3
Is the staff diverse?	1	2	3
Do staff accept and respect cultural differences?	1	2	3



The Children

Are the children allowed to select learning/play activities and toys by themselves?	1	2	3
Can the children choose not to participate in the activities?	1	2	3
Do the children have the opportunity to develop self-help skills, such as zipping, buttoning, and tying shoes?	1	2	3
Are the children encouraged to solve problems constructively?	1	2	3
Do the children appear actively involved and interested?	1	2	3



Activities

Are the planned activities appropriate for the ages and development stages of the children?	1	2	3
Are activities planned that help children express ideas and learn about the real world?	1	2	3
Do books, materials, and artwork reflect cultural diversity?	1	2	3
Are daily activity plans posted and followed?	1	2	3
Do activity plans provide for active and quiet play?	1	2	3
Do activity plans include opportunity for music, fingerplays, books, art activities, and outside play?	1	2	3
Does the program support early literacy by integrating appropriate activities into children's play?	1	2	3
Is there an opportunity for large group, small group, and individual activities?	1	2	3
Do activities encourage children to solve problems and think creatively?	1	2	3
Are children talked to, read to, and sung to by adults?	1	2	3
Do activities give children opportunities to learn new physical skills?	1	2	3
Are children taken outdoors daily, if weather permits?	1	2	3
Does the program schedule field trips and have written procedures?	1	2	3



Program Policies

Does the program have a written statement that describes its philosophy? Are you comfortable with it?	1	2	3
Does the program have a parent handbook with policies on discipline, illness, medicine, and accidents?	1	2	3
Does the program keep records on children and their development?	1	2	3
Does the child/staff ratio meet state standards?	1	2	3
Is the group size small enough so that children do not seem overwhelmed?	1	2	3
Is there a safe sleep policy?	1	2	3
Are there staff benefits (i.e. sick leave)?	1	2	3
Is there a plan for substitutes when staff are sick or on vacation?	1	2	3
Does the program have a plan for when a child is bitten?	1	2	3
Does the program have policies/procedures in case of accidents, injuries, or emergencies?	1	2	3
Does the program have a plan and resources for children with special needs?	1	2	3
Are children's families allowed to visit at any time? Is there an open door policy?	1	2	3
Are families actively involved in the program (i.e. advisory committee, teacher conferences)?	1	2	3
Does the program offer children's accident insurance?	1	2	3