

Choosing Quality Child Care Tips & Checklist

Selecting a child care centre or home child care provider, that both you and your child feel comfortable with, takes time and research. This parent checklist has been developed to assist you in finding quality child care.

Physical Environment

- Is the home/centre clean?
- Are all the toys/equipment cleaned and disinfected regularly?
- If there are pets present, are they currently vaccinated against rabies (verify with certificate)?
- Has the home/centre been inspected by the Fire Department, the Ministry of Community & Social Services and Ministry of Children & Youth Services, and Public Health?
- Are toxins, medicines, and weapons stored properly?

Illness

- Does the caregiver require contact names and phone numbers for emergencies?
- Does the caregiver ask for medical and dental histories including proof of immunization from all parents?
- Is the caregiver familiar with the signs and symptoms of childhood illnesses?
- If sick children are in care, does caregiver keep them apart from the other children?
- Does the caregiver ensure that parents are contacted when children are ill?

Safety

- Is safety considered in the purchase and use of toys and other equipment for use by children?
- Are the toys inspected on a regular basis for damage and removed when necessary?
- Is there a safe play area in the house (i.e. safety gates, plugs over electrical outlets)?
- Are there smoke detectors in the home/centre?
- Is the outdoor play equipment safe?
- Is the caregiver aware of appropriate clothing to avoid injury on play equipment?
- Is there sufficient supervision of the children during play?
- Is the caregiver up to date with CPR and First Aid Training? (verify with certificates)

- Has the caregiver completed a criminal check? (verify with police department)

Routine

- Does the caregiver provide a consistent and age-appropriate routine for play, snacks, mealtime, and sleep/rest for the children?

Play/Activities

- Is there age-appropriate stimulation to promote physical (fine motor and gross motor skills), emotional, social, and intellectual development?
- Does the caregiver limit the children's amount of TV watching?
- Are toys/equipment appropriate for your child's age?
- Does the caregiver provide for outdoor as well as indoor activities on a daily basis?

Meals

- Are meals and snacks nutritious? Are snacks provided between meals? Are sweet sticky foods served as snacks on a limited basis?
- Is the type and amount of food served appropriate for the age of the child?
- Are the meals served in a pleasant place?
- Are knives, forks, spoons, dining tables, and chairs age-appropriate?
- Does the caregiver have any formal food safety training?
- Does the caregiver have any allergy awareness information?
- Are written menus available?

Discipline

- Does the caregiver use positive ways to discipline children (i.e. praise, redirection, warning, etc.)?
- Does the discipline maintain the child's self-esteem?
- Is it right for the child's age? Is it time limited? Is it free of physical as well as emotional abuse?
- Is it the same as the parent's disciplinary practices?