

QUALITY CHILD CARE CHECKLIST:

What to look for in a quality child care program

When visiting a program, ask these questions. Your answers to these questions should be yes.

FACILITY:

- _____ Is the provider certified by the Department of Human Services and is it posted?
- _____ What Keystone STAR level is the provider?
- _____ Are there appropriate toys and materials for children of all age groups?
- _____ Does the provider encourage you to drop in and visit at any time?

STAFF:

- _____ Does staff communicate daily with families about their child's progress?
- _____ Does staffing allow for each child to receive individual attention?
- _____ Does staff sit and read to the children?
- _____ Does staff seem patient and receptive to children's needs?
- _____ Is staff respectful of children?
- _____ Is staff respectful of families?
- _____ Does staff encourage children's sharing, manners and other good behaviors?
- _____ Does staff appear lively, smiling and interacting in a positive manner with the children?
- _____ Does staff involve children in daily learning activities?

SAFETY:

- _____ Does the facility appear orderly and clean?
- _____ Are hazardous materials locked away?
- _____ Is an emergency plan posted?
- _____ Are there security measures in place?
- _____ Is there a policy for sick children and other circumstances?

CHILDREN:

- _____ Do the children have a consistent routine that they can understand and follow?
- _____ Do the children seem occupied and engaged?
- _____ Are the children involved in activities that promote learning?
- _____ Is there a policy on discipline?
- _____ Do the children seem happy?

FEELINGS:

- _____ Is my initial reaction upon entering the site a positive one?
- _____ Is this a place my child would enjoy?
- _____ Would my child be safe here?
- _____ Would I/we feel comfortable using this program?
- _____ Would my child learn new things every day at this program?



pennsylvania

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

www.dhs.pa.gov

A Family Guide: Steps to Selecting a Child Care Program and a Quality Checklist

Check Yes for Quality!



Early Learning Resource Center:

Four Steps to Selecting a Child Care Provider

ONE

Interview Caregivers

CALL FIRST

Ask:

- Is there an opening for my child?
- What hours and days are you open and where are you located?
- How much does care cost? Is financial assistance available?
- How many children are in your care? What age groups do you serve?
- Do you provide transportation?
- Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- Do you have a certificate of compliance?
- Other accreditations?
- What is your Keystone STAR level?
- When can I come to visit?

VISIT NEXT

Look for:

- Responsive, nurturing, warm interactions between caregiver and children.
- Children who are happily involved in daily activities and comfortable with their caregiver.
- A clean, safe and healthy indoor and outdoor environment, especially napping, eating and toileting areas.
- A variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks and climbing equipment, that your child will find interesting and that will contribute to your child's growth and development.
- Children getting individual attention.

Ask:

- Can I visit anytime?
- How do you handle discipline?
- What do you do if a child is sick?
- What would you do in case of emergency?
- Do you have a substitute or back-up caregiver?
- Where do children nap? How do you ensure that babies sleep on their backs?

- What education do you (and other staff) have? What ongoing professional development is available?
- May I see a copy of your state certificate of compliance?
- May I see a copy of additional accreditations?
- May I have a list of families (current and former) who have used your program?
- What kind of family involvement do you have?

TWO

Check References

ASK OTHER FAMILIES

- Did your child learn new things while enrolled in the program?
- How did the caregiver discipline your child?
- Did your child enjoy the child care experience?
- How did the caregiver respond to you as a parent?
- Do you feel that this program has helped prepare your child for school?
- Would you recommend the caregiver without reservation?
- If your child is no longer with the caregiver, why did you leave?

Ask the Local Early Learning Resource Center or Certification Office

- What regulations should child care providers meet in my area?
- Is there a record of complaints about the child care provider I am considering and how do I find out about it?
- Visit www.findchildcare.pa.gov. Check for inspection history, waivers, monitoring, and sanction information.

THREE

Make the Decision for Quality Care

FROM WHAT YOU HEARD AND SAW, ASK YOURSELF

- Which child care should I choose so that my child will be happy and grow?
- Which caregiver can meet any special accommodations for my child?

- Are the caregiver's values compatible with my family's values?
- Is the child care available and affordable according to my family's needs and resources?
- Do I feel good about my decision?

FOUR

Stay Involved

ASK YOURSELF

How can I arrange my schedule so I could...

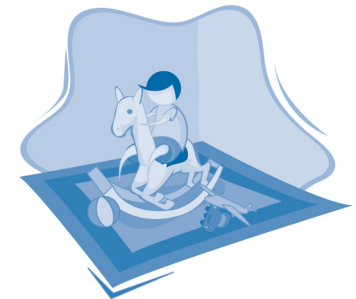
- Talk to my caregiver every day?
- Talk to my child every day about how the day went?
- Visit and observe my child in care at different times of the day?
- Be involved in my child's activities?

How can I work with my caregiver to resolve issues and concerns that may arise?

How do I keep informed about my child's growth and development while in care?

How can I promote good working conditions for my child care provider?

How can I network with other families?



Call 1-877-4PA-KIDS or your local Early Learning Resource Center for more information.