



Common questions to ask a child care provider

Quality child care programs make children feel safe, supported and cared for. They support children's learning and development by building relationships with families and educators, and providing an engaging and caring environment that helps children develop and grow.

Use these questions to guide your search for quality child care that suits you and your child's needs.

COSTS AND AVAILABILITY

1. Do you have space for my child? (if not, is there a waiting list and how long is it?)
2. How much does it cost? Are there additional fees? (ask caregivers to explain extra costs e.g., holidays, sick days, late pick-up or application fees)
3. Are there subsidized spots available at this centre?
4. Do you offer full-time and part-time enrollment?
5. How flexible are pickup/ drop-off times?
6. How do caregivers communicate with parents and when can parents visit?

FACT:

You can choose from care in a licensed centre or in a home. Some home providers are associated with a licensed agency and others are unlicensed. Costs vary.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

1. Are you licensed or unlicensed?
2. How many children do you care for?
3. How do you ensure the health of children? (e.g., sleep, cleanliness)
4. What happens when a child is sick? (e.g., are they sent home or given medications)

FACT:

Unlicensed providers may not care for more than 5 children in their home.

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5. What safety measures are in place?
(e.g., fire extinguisher, smoke/CO detectors, first aid kit, safety gates and plugs)
6. What is your emergency evacuation plan?
7. Do you offer an anaphylaxis plan for children with severe allergies?

FOOD AND NUTRITION

1. What kinds of snacks and meals do you provide?
2. Is food prepared on-site or catered in?
3. Are certain foods not allowed on-site? (e.g., nuts or other allergens)
4. Can you accommodate our family's dietary needs?
5. Is a fridge available for breast milk and is there a schedule for feeding?

LOOK FOR:

Meal plans that include all 4 food groups.

LEARNING AND PLAY

1. What will my child do throughout the day?
2. How do play materials support learning, creativity and social interaction?
3. How do you encourage both indoor and outdoor play?
How much time is spent outside?
4. How are different cultural traditions integrated into the program?
5. How are family members involved in the program?
6. What happens if a child is angry or upset?

LOOK FOR:

- An environment that supports children's learning through play and exploration.
- Family involvement that is welcomed and encouraged.

CAREGIVERS AND TRAINED PROFESSIONALS

1. What qualifications or training do staff and providers have?
(e.g., Registered Early Childhood Educator)
2. Does someone on-site have CPR and First Aid certification?
3. What happens when the staff or provider is sick or away?

LOOK FOR:

Staff or a provider that has qualifications or training related to working with children.

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