## PROGRAM CHECKLIST

# The Insider's Guide to Quality Preschool Programs



Choosing the best preschool program for your family is one of the most important decisions you will make as a parent. This guide has been created by education and child development leaders based on the best ideas and practices of quality early childhood education programs. This reference will enable you to make the best possible decision about early education for your family.



Use this checklist to ask questions and to compare the programs you visit. Spend at least one hour observing at the facility, paying careful attention to interactions between adults and children. Once you feel that you have obtained adequate information about every aspect of the program, you will be able to make a decision about the best preschool program for your child.

# Parent-to-Parent Tips

	PROGRAM I	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS		PROGRAM I	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
ls there an Open-Door Policy, making parents welcome visitors to the program at any time during				Do you see natural and everyday home materials for children to explore, not just plastic toys?			
the day?  Is parent participation in program  activities encouraged?				Is the director interested in your family: your questions, your concerns, and ideas about caring for your child?			
Do parents have access to center- based resources and information				Do the teachers seem happy to work together?			
on topics related to child development and parenting?  Are there opportunities for parents to meet together and				Do you see great conversations between teachers and children? Is there one-to-one conversation with eye contact?	П	П	п
be involved as a group?  Is there a system in place that				Do you see evidence of reading and writing?			
allows and encourages visiting families to speak with currently enrolled families?				Do you see specific learning centers in the classroom rather than just toys on the shelf?			
Is there a system in place that supports and orients children and parents into the program and into	_			Do the children in the classroom seem busy and engaged in an activity?			
new classrooms within the facility?  Is there an annual parent satisfaction survey?				Are the children in the classroom respectful of each other and the equipment?			
ls there a bulletin board with important information for parents?				Is there an easy system to let you know what happened during the day so you can follow up with your child			
Is there written daily communication to parents? Ask to see an example.				at home?  Is there a consistent approach to discipline?			

# Program

	PROGRAM I	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS		PROGRAM I	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
Is the program accredited or working toward accreditation, by the National				Is the program actively involved in the community?			
Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?  Is a consistent daily routine displayed				Are there individual and small group projects that involve language, science, and math?			
that the children can understand and follow?				Are there visible learning centers that are labeled with both words			
Are indoor and outdoor environments child-sized and designed specifically for children of all developmental abilities and needs?				and pictures?  Do children participate in the documentation of their learning through journaling and informational			
Does the program follow a positive approach to discipline through education rather than punishment?				bulletin boards?  Are there opportunities for informal and formal communication, including			
Are children happily and busily engaged in interesting and diverse activities and projects?				daily conversations, weekly notes or journals, informational bulletin boards, monthly newsletters, parent seminars or family events?	П	П	п
Is there a transition program in place to guide children and parents into elementary school?				Do children have access to a computer with educational		П	
Are the children encouraged to explore the environment; are they provided choices between individual and small group activities inside the classroom as well as outdoors?				programming?  Does each child have a current portfolio that outlines individual goals and documentation of progress to those goals?			
Are field trips or enrichment activities integrated into the program?				Is current learning documented on panels in the classroom?			
Do children create stories, books, and records of field trips and activities?							

Faculty

# Health and Safety

	PROGRAM I	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS		PROGRAM I	PROGRAM 2	BRIGHT HORIZONS
Are the program director and teachers open and responsive to your questions?				Do the teachers have the required training and certification in CPR, first aid, and infection control?			
Do teachers interact with children in caring, respectful, and positive ways?  Are teachers involved in a continuing				Are stringent health care policies in place and in practice that include teachers and children washing their			_
education program, including monthly, quarterly and annual trainings?				hands frequently throughout the day?  Are all surfaces disinfected throughout the day and at closing?			
Do teachers have on-site access to educational and community resources (i.e., curriculum guides, activity books, and professional journals)?				Are healthful food and beverages provided throughout the day?			
Do teachers work in teaching teams within a positive and professional				Is the facility professionally cleaned daily?  Are indoor and outdoor environments			
environment?  Do the teacher-to-child ratios meet or exceed the state requirements?				free from hazards at all times and regularly surveyed for safety?			
Are there long-term consistent teachers in the classroom?				Are security policies and procedures implemented, monitored, and evaluated regularly?			
Is there an opportunity for career development for teachers?				Are emergency procedures and evacuation routes established, posted, and practiced regularly?			
Are teachers offered tuition reimbursement for coursework related to early childhood education?				Can learning environments be easily supervised by teachers?			



Children need to enter school with the skills and desire to think for themselves, focus on their responsibilities, solve problems, work with others, communicate, and gain an increasing understanding of the world and how it works.

Every child needs to be ready to read.

Every child needs to approach the world with both wonder and the knowledge and skills that lead to success in math and science.

Every child needs the social skills to perform in a school classroom.

No matter what preschool program you select for your child, you and your child's teachers can join in a partnership to enhance your child's learning experience. By building strong home-school relationships from the start, parents and teachers can support children and prepare them for future success, both in and outside the classroom.



www.brighthorizons.com