



*Choosing the best program for your child is an exciting and important decision and can set the stage for the first five years of development. As you explore options and visit different centers, reference this checklist – created by parents and early childhood educators – to help you choose a safe, enriching environment and superior learning experience for your child.*

## Health and Safety

- ☐ Does the center have a secure entrance?  
What are the drop-off/pick-up procedures?
- ☐ Is there an open door policy? Can parents call or visit any time they want?
- ☐ Do teachers have the required training and certification in CPR and first aid?
- ☐ Do the teacher-to-child ratios meet or exceed the state requirements?
- ☐ Can all environments be easily supervised by teachers?
- ☐ How are food allergies handled?
- ☐ What is the illness policy?
- ☐ Are surfaces disinfected throughout the day and at closing?
- ☐ How are toys cleaned after they have been in a child's mouth?
- ☐ What is the center's approach to discipline?
- ☐ What snacks are provided throughout the day?  
Is there a menu?

## Programs & Curriculum

- ☐ Is the program accredited by or working toward accreditation by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)?
- ☐ Is there a curriculum? Ask to see an example of a weekly plan.
- ☐ Are children happily and busily engaged in interesting and diverse activities and projects?
- ☐ Do you see displays of what the children are doing and learning?
- ☐ How will my child's goals be outlined and progress be documented?
- ☐ How are children encouraged to explore the environment?
- ☐ Are children provided choices between individual and small group activities inside the classroom as well as outdoors?
- ☐ Which activities/enrichments are included in the tuition and which are an additional cost?

## Infant Program

- ☐ Can I nurse my baby? Can I bring in breast milk? Can it be frozen? How would breast milk and formula be labeled?
- ☐ Will each baby have his own crib or share with other children?
- ☐ Will my baby get tummy time each day?
- ☐ How is an infant offered a safe way to move, explore, be fed and comforted?
- ☐ Is the daily schedule adjusted according to each baby's needs or are all babies on the same schedule?

## Toddler Program

- ☐ How are children's self-help skills fostered?
- ☐ How do teachers work with children as they progress through the stages of toilet training/ readiness to train?
- ☐ Do children have to be toilet trained to attend preschool?
- ☐ How do teachers adapt to individual differences in children's eating and sleeping routines?

## Preschool Program

- ☐ How does the curriculum prepare my child for school?
- ☐ Are any writing or math programs used in addition to the standard curriculum?
- ☐ Do children have access to a variety of technology that allows them to think & create?
- ☐ What guidelines are in place to keep technology use supervised and below recommended daily guidelines?
- ☐ Does the center have supporting data on school readiness success?

## Loving and Professional Staff

- ☐ Do children have a consistent group of primary teachers? If so, how long have they been in early education?
- ☐ Do teachers interact with children in caring, respectful, and positive ways?
- ☐ How do teachers manage a wide range of abilities in one classroom?
- ☐ How will my child's individual needs be met?
- ☐ Are there opportunities for career development and training for teachers?

## Communication and Family Resources

- ☐ Are there any currently enrolled families willing to speak about the center?
- ☐ Is there a process for preparing parents and children for their first day?
- ☐ Is there daily communication about my child's day?
- ☐ How will my child's teachers help me support continued learning at home? How do teachers support what I do at home, here at the center?
- ☐ How will the center help me continue what my child is learning there at home?
- ☐ What resources are offered to parents?
- ☐ Are there opportunities for parents to meet together and be involved as a group?

## Notes

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