

Jump - Start their **future**

by Choosing Quality Child Care



Here's how.

- Look
- Learn
- Ask
- Compare
- Listen
- Visit



You want your children to get the best possible start in life...

Since you first held your child, you've done everything you can to give him the best start possible. You've held and hugged her. You've taught and protected him. You've nurtured her. Now it's time for you to find a partner in your child's daily development. That caring someone whose main goal will be to help your child play, learn, grow, and discover the world.

...that's why quality child care makes all the difference.

Quality Care Begins With You

As a parent, *you* are most qualified to find the best care for your child. This brochure will simply guide you. Meet with several caregivers. Ask questions, and trust your own feelings about what is best for your child. Then, be sure to keep in touch with your caregiver. When you drop off and pick up your child, notice any changes. Ask new questions as soon as they come to mind.



Consider Your Child First

As you talk with each child care provider, think about your child. You want him to be comfortable and happy. You want her to have plenty of fun things to do. Start out with these basic questions:

- Who will take care of your child?
- With whom will your child play? What activities will occupy them?
- Are toys right for your child's age? Are they easy to reach?
- Where will your child keep his or her "stuff"?
- Are the children and caregivers having fun together?



**DHS Child Care Resource and Referral Service
Can Guide You In The Right Direction.
Call 1-800-462-8261**

Before You Get Started, Learn How to Recognize Quality Child Care.

Finding the Best Caregiver

A warm and loving relationship between the caregiver and your child is the foundation of quality child care. A good understanding between you and the provider is important, too. Look for someone who has attitudes and values similar to yours. Watch closely to see how the caregiver relates to the other children. Then ask yourself these questions:

- Do the children seem happy and involved?
- Is the caregiver warm, friendly, calm, and patient with them?
- Does the caregiver listen to the children when they talk?
- Does he or she talk to the children and give them chances to express themselves?
- Can children make choices and do things for themselves?
- Is each child treated as if he or she is special?
- What special training or credentials does the caregiver have?

Recognizing the Right Program

Another sign of quality care is activities and experiences that help your child's development. With this in mind, consider these questions:

- Are plenty of age-appropriate toys and materials available to help children learn and grow?
- Do the activities allow children to think creatively?
- Can children play in groups and alone, too?
- Does the caregiver post a schedule? Are play and activity times balanced with times for reading and rest?
- Are parents free to visit at any time?
- How does the program encourage further training for its child care providers?

Choosing the Best Place

The child care setting — the *place* you take your child each day — is another key indicator of quality child care. You want your child to be healthy and safe while you're at work.



While you look over the center or home, consider these questions:

- Is an up-to-date certificate or license displayed?
- Are there enough caregivers for the number and age of children?
- Is the facility or home clean, well-lit, cheerful, and bright?
- Are there enough indoor and outdoor materials and play equipment? Are they age-appropriate, clean, safe, and in good repair?

Check Them Out for Yourself

A picture is worth a thousand words. It's true for almost everything, especially child care. Visit every program you are considering. Visit more than once and at different times of the day. That way, you'll get a clear picture of how the program works. You'll see the caregiver's style and routines. And, once you've selected the right caregiver, keep on visiting. You can talk with the caregiver, ask questions, and stay connected.

For more information
and assistance, call the
**DHS Child Care Resource
and Referral Service**
at **1-800-462-8261**.



Check list

Getting Started... Punch out this handy pocket-size card to take with you when you interview child care providers.

Does the Caregiver:

- seem warm, friendly, calm, and patient with the children?
- talk with the children and listen to them, too?
- have child care training and qualifications?

Does the Program:

- have age-appropriate materials and activities that encourage creativity?
- include time for play, reading and rest?
- welcome parent involvement and spur-of-the-moment visits?

Does the Place:

- have an up-to-date license or certificate posted?
- appear clean, safe, and well-lit?
- have enough caregivers for the number of children?

Yes! Please send me more information on:

- Quality Child Care Checklist
- Child care regulations
- Family and Group child care
- Information about the Resource and Referral Service
- Center-based care
- Materials available in Spanish
- School-age care
- Getting a speaker for my group

Name

Address

City

County

State

Zip

Phone (Home)

(Work)

For help and information, call the DHS Child Care Resource and Referral Service at 1-800-462-8261.

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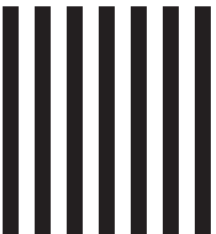
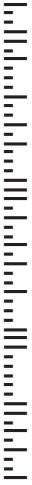


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