

Checklist for Selecting Child Care

This list can be used as a guideline when visiting or interviewing potential child care providers. We recommend that both parents review this list and discuss priorities and concerns together before beginning their search. These questions will help you evaluate your options and reach a decision you can feel good about. You may have other questions that aren't included here. If so, add them in the space provided at the end of the list before you visit a program.

1. Read all the questions carefully.
2. Highlight the items that are most important to you.
3. Visit a few programs before you make a decision. Schedule your visits in advance and allow enough time for observation and questions. If you are still unsure of what type of care you would like best, visit a few of each to help you decide.
4. After you narrow down your choices to one or two favorites, schedule visits with your child. Observe how the caregiver and your child interact.
5. Make copies of this list and keep one for each program. This will allow you to keep detailed records of your observations and compare notes at the end of your visits.
6. Before making a final decision, consider your needs as well as your child's. Remember that you, as well as your child, will have a relationship with this caregiver.
7. It is extremely important to help your child adjust comfortably to any new child care arrangement. Spend time together observing the program on a number of occasions before the child actually begins care. Start him/her off slowly, possibly with a shorter day or week schedule. When you drop off your child the first week or first few weeks, allow time to adjust and transition comfortably. Discuss the caregiver's preferred method for drop off and separation.
8. Make sure there is an open door policy. *Don't select any program that will not allow you to drop in anytime, unannounced, to check on your child.*

**For more information
About how to choose child care call**

**Broomfield Child Care Assistance Program
720-887-2275**

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

The Basics:

- Is the program licensed? How many children are they licensed to care for? Is the license posted and current? _____
- How long have they been providing care? What kind of staff turnover has occurred over the last few years? _____
- What is the staff/child ratio? Does this change each day? _____
- What is their policy if a child is sick? _____
- Do they have a vacation policy? Is this in writing? Are there other written policies and/or contracts? _____
- Does the program close for any holidays? Does it follow the schedule of the local school district? _____
- Do they care for their own children at the same time? Are there any other family members at home when providing care? _____
- How many children were actually being cared for during your visit? _____
- What happens when the caregiver is sick or on vacation? Are there substitutes? If so, how are they screened? _____
- Is there a sign-in/sign-out policy for children? How do they ensure that children can only leave with designated adults? _____
- Will they provide references? _____
- Have they ever had any licensing violations? If so, how were they remedied? _____

What to look for in the physical environment:

- Is the facility safe, clean and set up appropriately for the ages served? _____
- Are toxic items stored safely out of reach? _____
- Is the space bright, well ventilated, and does it have adequate exits? _____
- Are all electrical outlets covered? Are all poisonous materials kept locked and out of the way? _____
- Are stairs secured from babies and toddlers? _____
- Are there a variety of age appropriate toys available? Are these rotated? _____
- How do they safeguard against germs? _____

- How are toys with small pieces kept away from babies and toddlers? _____
- What type of outside play space is available? Is there plenty of room for children to run and play? Is there a secure fence? _____
- What type of outdoor play equipment is available? Is it safe? Are there any broken, rusted or dangerous parts? _____
- Are emergency numbers posted (poison center, fire department, etc.?) _____
- Are emergency numbers of the parents kept in a convenient place and up to date? _____
- Are there any pets? Are they allowed in the same space with the children or kept separately? Are they vaccinated? Is their food kept out of the reach of the children? _____
- Where do they change diapers? Is it a safe location? Is it close to a sink? Are the dirty diapers kept away from the children? _____
- Where do the children sleep? Are they required to nap at a specific time? Are they wakened at a specific time? What if a child doesn't fall asleep? _____
- Is there an area for children needing some quiet time/space? _____

Caregiver:

- Do the caregivers have any early childhood training/education? _____
- Are they certified in first aid and CPR? _____
- Is the caregiver relaxed, calm and comfortable with the children? _____
- How does the caregiver interact with the children? Does s/he listen carefully to them, talk to them in a way they can understand? Does s/he make eye contact with the children? _____
- Does the caregiver interact and play with the children? Does s/he read to them? _____
- What is the caregiver's policy on television/videos? _____
- Does the caregiver use positive forms of discipline? Ask for examples. _____
- Do you feel comfortable with this person? How does s/he communicate with you? _____
- Will your child be transported anywhere by the provider? Who will provide the car seat? _____
- What are the caregiver's feelings about potty training, napping, use of bottles and pacifiers, separation from parents, etc? _____
- Is s/he always available by phone? _____

Program:

- Does the daily schedule fit your expectations for structure or flexibility? _____
- What is the philosophy of the program and it's staff? _____
- Is there a weekly menu of meals and snacks posted? _____
- Are meals and snacks nutritious, fresh, and appetizingly presented? _____
- What types of activities are planned? Are these initiated by the adults or the children? _____
- Are there field trips? _____
- How are children transported? Are there adequate child restraint systems? Are drivers insured? _____
- Do the children seem happy? _____
- Is there time each day for music, outdoor play, art, reading, quiet time, etc.? _____
- Are there age appropriate books? _____
- Do the children have free access to art supplies? _____

Other:

- Is there a designated drop off time? What is the policy for late pick-up? _____
- Is there a trial period? _____
- Can I drop in unannounced at any time? _____
- Can nursing mothers come during the day to nurse? Is the caregiver familiar with proper handling of expressed breast milk? _____
- What kind of diapers are allowed? Are they provided by the parent or caregiver? What about wipes? _____
- Is food provided by the caregiver or the parent? _____
- Is there a discount for more than one child from one family? _____
- Is there a regular method for communication with parents (newsletter, parent conferences, phone conversations, etc.)? _____
- Are parents encouraged to participate? If so, how? _____
- Are the ideas and philosophies of the caregiver similar to your own? _____
- Are there any cultural, religious or ethnic differences that need to be discussed? _____

Your own questions:

- _____
- _____
- _____