

AllAboutChildCare.info

ALL ABOUT CHILD CARE FOR INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND PRESCHOOLERS

by Kathy Lee

WHO'S GOING TO BE TAKING CARE OF MY CHILD?

**Your Free Checklist Guide to finding the perfect fit
for you, your child and your child care needs.**



“Child Care facilities are as different as the children needing them, so it’s quite the chore searching out and finding the perfect one that aligns with your family dynamic. How to discover and actually ask for what you want for your child requires that you know the questions to ask. But in the overwhelming time constraints and myriad of choices you face how do you summon the presence of mind to keep it all together and do it thoroughly? **You take along this Checklist Guide and show them that you know what you’re talking about when it comes down to finding a caregiver for your precious baby”.**

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“Read this before we move on. In many instances, the person who is taking you on a guided tour of their child care facility will already be answering a great number of the questions listed in this guide. But even though you have all the questions that can be asked and answered, it’s still your final decision that forms the choice. You have to go with your gut and what is most important to you in making this important selection. I wish you luck”.

Here are some questions you should be asking the provider if they haven’t already been answered in your guided tour:

- How many Children are in your program?
- How many in your Staff?
- What is the Ratio of Children per Adult in the classroom?
- Please describe a typical day.
- Are there computers, TVs, or tablets in the classroom?
If so, how much screen time does a child receive?
- How will I learn about my child’s day?
Will I be getting Daily Reports?
Are there Camera’s in the classrooms?
- How can I keep in touch with my child’s Teacher?
Email? Phone?
- How often will there be Parent Teacher Conferences?
- Can I visit unannounced?
- How do you know that if I ask someone to pick up my child for me that they are authorized?
- How do you handle a Medical Emergency?
- How do you handle a child who is Crying or Misbehaving?



As you can see, there's a lot of important things you can learn if you ask the right questions and yet there's still many important ones to follow; so keep on reading. But when we've exhausted our questions we've still got our eyes to make some valuable assessments. Read the entire guide to find out what I mean.

Questions for the Provider

Continue below:

- How do you handle a child who hits another?
- What is the Staff Turnover?
- What are the Staff Requirements?
Are all Teachers Certified?... Is Staff CPR & First Aid Certified?
- Are there monthly Fire Drills; An Emergency Evacuation Plan?
- Can you give my child Medicine?
- What is the the rest time (nap) routine?
Must my child take a nap?
- Do you help with Toilet Learning if my child is still in diapers?
- Have you had any Violations? If so, what were they?
- Can I contact a parent for references?
- What is your Transition Plan for a new child starting?
- How is Tuition paid?
- How do you celebrate Holidays and Birthdays?
- Are you a "nut-free" program?
- Do I bring lunch and snacks or are they provided?
- Are you NAEYC Accredited?

From the NAEYC site: Accredited programs have met NAEYC's 10 standards for high quality early childhood education. These programs have demonstrated that they provide a safe and healthy environment for children, have teachers who are well trained, have access to excellent teaching materials, and work with a curriculum that is appropriately challenging and developmentally sound.



Now that we know the questions we'd like answered, let's take a look around while we're there and make some valuable observations. In this way you can make a judgment as to whether the claims they make have actually been put into practice. **Case in point:** Do the caregivers participate in the children's play or are they standing over to the side?

Here are some things to look for on your visit:

- Is the program friendly, clean, and attractive?
- Do caregivers seem to pay children individual attention?
Do they look happy to be there, enjoying their jobs?
- Were you and your child welcomed when you entered the program and the classroom?
- Do you see caregivers hug children who need comfort?
Do they get down and speak with the children at eye level?
- Is there a variety of age appropriate toys, books, & materials?
- Do children seem enthusiastic, happy, even relaxed?
Most importantly, are they actively engaged?
- Can you observe where they eat, rest, and toilet?
- Is there an ample amount of outdoor space & equipment?
- Do staff use cell phones while watching the children?
- Are the caregivers holding the infants during feeding time?
- Are the caregivers spending their time interacting with the infants by talking and playing with them?
- Is each infant on their own schedule during the day?
Is each one fed, changed, and put down for a nap individually?



There's still many more observations to make, all with the purpose of securing a safe and caring environment for your baby. And keep in mind what I mentioned earlier; You might not have to ask a million questions because your tour guide might supply you with most of the information as part of their presentation. But just in case they don't, you're forearmed and visually alert. Please keep reading for what you might not think of on your own.

Here are more...

- During feeding time, are the caregivers holding the infants?
- Do you observe gloves being worn during Diaper Changing?
Is the changing area sterilized after each change?
- Are there clean, bright, interesting materials at the infant's level? Is there music or art exploration to engage them?
- Are the children permitted to crawl and explore?
Are there carpets and rugs installed to make this possible?
- Do the children go outside twice a day? Where do they go?
- Where do the children sleep? Do they share cribs in the infant room? Do the toddlers sleep on cots or mats?
Is there anything special that I have to bring?
- How do they sanitize the changing tables, the toilets, and the tables and equipment that the children play and eat on?
- Are the electrical outlets covered and all other wires inaccessible? Any sharp or potential choking hazards? Are furniture edges smooth? Any dangling curtain/blind cords? Are floors clean, stairs & doorways protected with locked gates, and soft surfaces made available for sitting and resting? *It's not about nitpicking, it's what you would plan on in your own home!*



Let's take a break for the moment and I'll come back to wrap up with some of the observational and substantive questions that I might have omitted, but first let's change our focus to you. I have been asked questions by parents and other family members about some important issues that affect them directly. Pretty important ones that concern privacy, safety information regarding third parties, and other things you might forget to consider.

Yes, this is all about you:

- How did you feel when you walked into the program?
Did it actually feel like a good, relaxed fit for you and the family?
Do you trust the program/person with the care of your child?
- Are you satisfied with their yearly calendar of closing dates?
- If you were a child, would you like spending time there?
Does their program philosophy meet your family's needs?
- If they provide transportation, are vehicles & drivers licensed and insured? Are children going to be restrained in the latest appropriate safety seat for their age and weight?



- Are program policies reasonable and understandable?
- Are you satisfied with their sick/vacation/alternate sick room care policies? *There's more about you on the following page.*

Here are some additional things from the last page:



- Is there a Family Handbook that I could have that explains everything from their Mission Statement to where to locate lost belongings?
- Do the teachers take pictures of my child? If so, where are they displayed?
Can I say no to having my child's picture taken?
- Is the program on Facebook, Instagram or other Social Media?
Is the site public or private? What are the safety measures put into place? What about the program's website? Are children identified there and shown in their daily activities?
- How is discipline handled?





So, as promised, here's my wrap up of those things I forgot to add, and those things I wanted to stress further. I hope this guide will assist you in your task of finding the right fit for your baby's needs and nurturing in your quest to locate the program that gives you the most peace of mind. It's an unenviable task only a parent or loving guardian can perform successfully..

My mixed bag of randomly omitted thoughts with an explanation:

- **Do the Toddlers have their own Playground?**
- **Do the classrooms have books, pictures, decorations, foods, dolls, and other materials that celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity?**
- **Are things labeled with both pictures and words in the languages of all the children?**
- **Are sensory play activities included in the children's day?**
Is there a Water Table (water, sand, rice, etc.) or Light Table, along with Easels, Painting, and Play-Doh?

Readers, it was a labor of love assembling the questions I felt you should keep in mind when interviewing your caregiver candidates and those I felt you should ask yourself as you take tours through their respective facilities observing their programs in action. It's not an enviable task for you by any means. I am innately predisposed to care for and nurture children, that's why I chose to spend my entire career doing just that. My own children have been in child care, so I know that the feelings of separation are overwhelming to say the very least. That's why I have assembled this checklist guide to assist you in trying to discover who is the best for your family's needs for child care assistance. I am not familiar with any particular child care facility or their status as it relates to accredited standards; That's one of the jobs I attributed to you in this checklist guide. So, no matter what state you are in, you can always check them out on our site's Resource Center at allaboutchildcare.info and use this checklist guide as an information input tool. I'd love to hear how you made out and whether this checklist guide made a difference to you. Email me anytime at allaboutchildcare.info@gmail.com. Kathy



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