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Evaluating Providers

The following points are good ways to measure the quality of a child care home or center.

Caregivers/Teachers

- Do the caregivers/teachers seem to really like children?
- Do the caregivers/teachers get down on each child's level to speak to the child?
- Are children greeted when they arrive?
- Are children's needs quickly met even when things get busy?
- Are the caregivers/teachers trained in CPR, first aid, and early childhood education?
- Are the caregivers/teachers involved in continuing education programs?
- Does the program keep up with children's changing interests?
- Will the caregivers/teachers always be ready to answer your questions?
- Will the caregivers/teachers tell you what your child is doing every day?
- Are parents' ideas welcomed? Are there ways for you to get involved?
- Do the caregivers/teachers and children enjoy being together?
- Is there enough staff to serve the children? (Ask local experts about the best staff/child ratios for different age groups.)
- Are caregivers/teachers trained and experienced?
- Have they participated in early childhood development classes?

Setting

- Is the atmosphere bright and pleasant?
- Is there a fenced-in outdoor play area with a variety of safe equipment? Can the caregivers/teachers see the entire playground at all times?
- Are there different areas for resting, quiet play and active play? Is there enough space for the children in all of these areas?

Activities

- Is there a daily balance of play time, story time, activity time and nap time?
- Are the activities right for each age group?
- Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children?
- Are toys clean, safe and within reach of the children?

In General

- Do you agree with the discipline practices?
- Do you hear the sounds of happy children?
- Are children comforted when needed?
- Is the program licensed or regulated?
- Are surprise visits by parents encouraged?
- Will your child be happy there?

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