



Child Care TODAY

Child Care Touring Checklist

When choosing child care, be sure to visit the facility and tour all areas where your child will be cared for. It is a good idea to bring your child along to see how the staff interact with her, but don't be surprised if she becomes shy or nervous; especially if this is the first time she's experienced group care. The new experiences and faces may make her feel a little overwhelmed. Decide based on your child's personality if you think it is something she can handle.



As you tour the facility, watch for the following:

- Well equipped classrooms.
- Do there seem to be plenty of toys and are they in good repair?
- Are there duplicates of items, especially for toddlers who are not good at sharing?
- Are dramatic play supplies offered (dress-up clothes, shopping carts, dolls, policeman hats, etc.)?
- Posted classroom schedules and events calendars.
- Routines make children feel comfortable and safe. Is there a routine for each classroom?
- Does the school have a calendar of events in which the entire school community takes part?
- A large play area for children to expend energy when they cannot go outside.
- A clean environment.
- Are shelves cluttered with toys and teacher supplies or does the classroom have an open, tidy feel?
- Are surfaces dusty or clean?
- If applicable, are refrigerators and microwaves clean?
- Are floors and carpets clean?
- Are you required to remove shoes when entering an infant classroom?
- Do teachers wash hands regularly? Are you asked to wash your hands upon entering a classroom?
- Are children's personal items separated so they do not touch one another? (e.g. personal cubbies)
- A safe, secure and comfortable feeling when you interact with the staff and children.
- Are the staff personnel warm, friendly and courteous?
- Do you feel as though the person touring the center with you is rushed and skipping over things or are they willing to take as much time as necessary to answer all your questions and show you anything you are interested in seeing (excluding information legally deemed private, of course).
- Do you hear positive, encouraging tones being used with the children? Or do you hearing shouting or negative tones?
- Do the children look happy and seem to feel at home in their environment? Or is there an overwhelming sound of crying and arguing among the children?
- Is it clear who belongs in the building? (Are name badges or uniforms required?)
- Is there regular school to parent communication and by what means? Is there an area with posted information for parents regarding upcoming events and helpful information?
- Does the front desk staff (director or management) know the children's names and do the children know them?
- Are children involved in play and projects throughout the day?
- If your child is with you, does your "tour guide" speak to your child and try to make her feel more comfortable? Does your child seem interested in the environment and seem to let her guard down at least once during your visit? (This depends on your child. Some children may not let their guard down at all; but, if she is old enough, an open conversation about her feelings will give you a good deal of information.)



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Important questions to ask:

- What are your hours?
- Are you open year round?
- Is a lunch program offered?
- Are snacks offered?
- Is there a curriculum?
- What added programs are available? (dance, music, etc.)
- What is the cost of added programming?
- What level of security is offered?
- Is the staff certified in pediatric CPR and First Aid?
- How much outdoor time is available to children?
- Is the outdoor area separated so younger children and older children can play outdoors at the same time safely?
- Does each child have his/her own cot or crib for naptime?
- Are toys sanitized every day?
- Is there a private area for nursing mothers to nurse infants?
- What is the education of the staff?
- Is the staff required to take professional development courses?
- What is the teacher to child ratio?
- What summer programming is offered? Is there an additional cost?
- How often are diapers changed?
- What are the diaper changing procedures?
- Where do the children play in inclement weather?
- What happens if your child becomes sick while at the center?
- Are parents told if a communicable disease, such as chicken pox, is contracted in your child's classroom?
- Are you notified if your child is injured while at the center and how?
- What is the center's discipline policy?

