

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, check the license status of your child care , or search for licensed care providers, dial 211 or visit 211childcare.org.

PARENTS



how to
choose
a licensed
child care
provider



HELPFUL TIPS FOR PARENTS

Choosing a child care program is one of the most difficult and important decisions you will ever make for your child. The following are tips on what to consider when choosing a child care program. The Connecticut Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is responsible for licensing and regulating child care programs in Connecticut.

DETERMINE IF THE PROGRAM IS LICENSED

Find a licensed care provider near you by dialing 211 or visiting 211childcare.org.

VISIT THE PROGRAM

Try to visit when children are present, prior to enrolling your child. After enrollment, make unannounced visits at different times during the day. Licensed programs are required to give parents of enrolled children access during hours of operation. Ask to see the most recent OEC inspection report.

OBSERVE STAFF INTERACTION

Are staff members friendly and comfortable with the children? Do they encourage conversation and play? Do they allow the children to make choices? Children should be supervised at all times. Child care centers are required to have 1 staff for every 4 children (under the age of 3) and 1 staff for every 10 children (over 3). Family providers generally are licensed to care for up to 6 full-time children and 3 before and after school children with only 2 being under the age of 2 years, unless an approved assistant or substitute is present.

CONSIDER HEALTH AND SAFETY

Is the program clean and safe? Are potentially hazardous substances kept away from children? Are there clean and sanitary diapering areas? Is the playground free of hazards? Does the program have emergency plans?

ASK QUESTIONS

Are the staff qualified? How many children are in your care? Are there working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors? Can children with special needs be accommodated? What is a typical day like? Are staff trained to administer medications? What discipline methods are used at the program? Ask if they have a parent handbook with policies on topics such as hours and days of operation, administration of medications, fees, emergencies, behavior management, and meals and snacks. Does the program have emergency plans?

ASK FOR REFERENCES

Ask the program for names of current or previous families whom you can contact for information about their experience at the child care program.

CHECK LIST FOR PARENTS

- + License posted
- + Ample age-appropriate indoor and outdoor space
- + Within licensed capacity
- + Safe space- smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, covered outlets
- + Emergency plans and emergency numbers posted
- + First Aid supplies
- + Sufficient qualified staff
- + Appropriate supervision
- + Positive discipline
- + Clean facility
- + Sufficient age-appropriate toys
- + Intact paint
- + Plentiful drinking water
- + Frequent hand washing
- + Windows protected
- + Poisons/cleaning supplies and medicines inaccessible
- + Pets up to date for rabies vaccine
- + Provisions for napping
- + Pools fenced to 4 feet with gates either self-closing/self-latching or locked
- + Shock absorbing material under climbers and swings
- + Nutritious snacks
- + Infants held for bottle feeding
- + Breast feeding friendly
- + Special needs accommodated
- + Daily schedule meets children's needs

