

Keys to Quality Child Care Checklist

This comprehensive checklist is based on guidelines identified by child development specialists, parents, and researchers to help you make the right choice when choosing child care.

Name of Programs to Visit	Total Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
1.				
2.				
3.				

Area of Responsibility: Qualifications	Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
As a child care center director, what level of education and experience do you have? How much of your education has been in the early education field? Does your previous work experience include child care?				
As a family child care provider, have you had specific training in early childhood education? If yes, how much? Any certifications?				
Does each one of your teachers/assistant teachers/helpers have early childhood education and experience? Degrees, certifications? What is your turnover rate?				
Do the adults in your center/home continue to receive early childhood training and education? Are adults trained in child abuse prevention?				
Have all adults been cleared by TrustLine?				
May I see a copy of your child care license?				
NOTES:				

Area of Responsibility: Cost & Availability	Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
What ages do you accept? Are there any openings? Waiting list?				
What are your hours for full- and part-time care? Is transportation provided for before and after school programs?				
May I have a copy of your fee schedule? Sibling discount? Fees include meals? Still a charge for illness or vacation – yours or mine? Any extra fees – emergency kits, supplies, picking up late fees, etc.? What holidays are you closed? Do you have a back up plan if you are ill – qualified substitute?				
NOTES:				

Area of Responsibility: Supervision & Discipline	Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
How many caregivers work with the children? Do you meet California's guidelines for adult-to-child ratios? (Make sure to check yourself!)				
What type of disciplinary techniques do you use with the children in your care? (The answer should be consistent, fair and positive.)				
Are the children supervised at all times? During meal times, outdoor play, nap time?				
Is there a plan in case a child gets lost?				
Does the atmosphere seem rigid or relaxed? Which appeals to you and your child?				
Do the caregivers seem warm, welcoming and caring?				
Are infants given equal time and attention as the older children? Do they seem to spend too much time in the swing, crib or play pen?				
NOTES:				

Area of Responsibility: Learning & Play	Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
What type of schedule or routine that the children follow each day?				
Is there time for inside play, outside play, music, arts & crafts, reading, games, drama?				
Are there specific areas for the different kinds of learning and play?				
Are the books and toys age appropriate? Within reach of all ages? Is the space organized and clean? Would your child enjoy the choices available to him?				
How much time will be spent reading with my child? Will he be encouraged to explore books on his own?				
What types of physical activities are planned for children when the weather does not permit outside play?				
Is there a television? How much time are the children allowed to watch?				
Will my child have ample opportunity to communicate through conversation and questions with the other children and adults?				
Do you offer any additional programs such as dance, gymnastics, computer, karate, Spanish, etc.? Is there a fee to participate?				
NOTES:				

Area of Responsibility: Health & Safety	Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
Do you smoke?				
Are there animals in the child care environment when children are present?				
Are all adults trained in pediatric first aid and CPR? Are they certified? Where are your emergency kits and/or first aid supplies located?				
Do you have an emergency plan in place? Is the exit plan displayed? Do you practice earthquake and fire drills with the children?				
Do you serve nutritious meals, snacks and beverages? Is there a posted menu? What nutrition guidelines do you use? How do you deal with food allergies and restrictions? What happens if my child doesn't want to eat at the designated time? Is water available at all times?				
What is your sick child policy? Do you administer medications to children? Where is the medicine stored? Do all enrolled children have up to date immunizations?				
How do you handle nap times? Does each child have their own crib or cot and linens? Do you provide linens or do I bring them from home? Where do you store the beds and linens? Are children supervised during nap time? Person or monitor?				
Do you help children with toilet training? What age do you start? Are there separate and private restrooms for boys and girls? Do I supply my own diapers? Where do you store my child's toiletries?				
Are children ever transported in a vehicle? Do you have age-appropriate car seats and safety belts? Would you ever leave a child (of any age) in the car while you run a quick errand (The answer should be NO!)?				
Examine the following environmental factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper medicine and chemical storage • Smoke detectors • Enough space, clean and comfortable – inside and outside • Safety gates, door and cabinet locks where appropriate • Proper hand washing and diaper changing techniques are followed • Toys, furniture, flooring, paint, outside areas are all in clean and good working condition • Outlets, heaters and radiators covered • More than one exit in case of fire • Pool safety fence or cover • Furniture is appropriately strapped in case of earthquake 				
NOTES:				

Area of Responsibility: Communication	Rating			
	Best	Good	Okay	Poor
Are there specific hours that I am allowed to visit? The answer should be that you are welcome and encouraged to visit any time your child is in care.				
How will information be communicated to me about my child? Will you relate positive stories and experiences as well as concerns? Meals eaten, nap taken, toilet visits, etc.				
What is the preferred method of communication from me to my caregiver/teacher? By personal drop in, appointment, phone or e-mail? Do you send out program newsletters?				
How do you celebrate birthdays and holidays? Are parents expected and/or invited to participate?				
How would you handle a parent complaint? Have you ever had one reported to Community Care Licensing?				
Are parents encouraged to participate in the program? Asked for feedback regarding the program? What do you expect from me as a parent?				
Are conferences held to discuss my child on a regular basis?				
Are the policies and procedures in writing? Will I receive a copy of them?				
Do I need to sign a contract?				
Ask for at least three references – past and present parents.				

NOTES: