

Child Care Interview Guide for Parents

It's never rude to ask

While we know cost and convenience play a role in selecting the appropriate daycare provider for your child, quality is equally as important. Many providers understand that you'll have questions about how they operate. It's never rude to ask.

About the home and provider

- How long have you been a provider?
- Why did you go into child care?
- How many children do you care for?
- What do you like most about being a childcare provider?
- What do you try to accomplish with the children?
- Are you certified in CPR/first aid and SUIDS?
- How many hours of continued education do you complete each year?
- Do others ever help you provide care or substitute when you need to leave for appointments? Who are they and what are their qualifications? Will I have an opportunity to meet any others who work in the home?

About supervision

- What areas of the home do you use for day care?
- Do you remain within sight or sound of the children at all times?
- Do you use a monitoring device during naptime? (ex. video or audio monitor)
- What are your supervision practices during meal preparation and diapering?
- Do children younger than school age move as a group from one level of the home to the next with you?
- When children younger than school age are outdoors, are you with them at all times?
- Do you keep children within view when they are in high chairs, swings or bouncy chairs?
- Do you supervise any teenage helpers that may assist you?

About health and safety issues

- Is the environment clean?
- Are there hazards in any areas children may be?
- Are toxic cleaning supplies and other dangers locked away? (If licensed they are required to keep all dangers "out-of-reach" from children).
- Is the house child-proofed with gates, outlet covers and latches on cupboards?
- Are there pets that my child will be interacting with? How many? Do you supervise contact with pets?
- Is there an outdoor play area? Is it free of hazards and animal waste?

- Are there adequate first aid items?
- How do you handle a child getting hurt?
- Do you organize fire and tornado drills? (If licensed they are required to perform monthly drills).
- What is your procedure for prescription and over-the-counter medications?
- Are there smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in the home?
- Where will my child eat?
- Are nutritious snacks and meals offered?

About behavior guidance and self esteem

- What methods do you use to encourage positive behavior?
- How do you handle different ages and stages of development?
- How do you encourage children to handle situations of conflict and frustration?
- Are limits set with consistent reinforcement?
- How do you encourage personal expression?
- Are you able to intervene if a child's behavior becomes unruly?
- How do you encourage participation?
- How is individual attention given to each child?

About infants and toddlers

- How is the infants' environment protected to allow them to explore?
- Where will my baby sleep? Is the crib empty of everything: including blankets, pillows, toys and bumper pads? (Infants under age one are not allowed to sleep with anything, other than a pacifier, while at a licensed childcare).
- Will my baby always be laid down to sleep face up? (Infants under age one must be laid down on their backs for naps at a licensed childcare).
- How often will you check on my sleeping baby?
- How often do you change diapers?
- Where are they changed and what is the disinfecting procedure?
- How is toilet training handled?
- How do you feel about bottles, pacifiers, stuffed animals and security blankets for children over age one?
- How do you handle feedings and meals?
- How long do you allow infants to cry before picking them up?
- How often will you hold my baby?
- What do you think a baby needs from you at their age?
- What do you do with a baby when older children are playing outdoors?

About programs and activities

- What types of activities do you provide for various age groups? How much space is available for those activities?

- Are materials and shelves accessible to children?
- Are children allowed to explore?
- Is there a mixture of indoor and outdoor activities?
- Are there a variety of age-appropriate play materials that encourage creativity and motor development?
- How often do you clean the toys?
- How much television do you allow children to watch?
- Do you offer a preschool curriculum and/or do the kids learn through play based activities (such as through a Montessori type of learning)?

About communication

- How will you keep me apprised of what happens each day?
- Are parents encouraged to visit during the day?
- How do you resolve conflicts between yourself and parents?

About business policies

- What are your business hours? Do you ever provide early/late or overnight care? If yes, what is the rate for those?
- Are there written policies?
- Can I be given a copy of your policy and our contract?
- What is your fee? When are fees collected? Is there a late fee?
- In what form(s) can payment be made?
- Will I be issued a receipt?
- Will I have to pay for holidays when my child does not attend?
- Will I have to pay for days when my child is sick and does not attend?
- What happens when you are sick? Do you have paid sick days?
- Will I have to pay when my family takes vacation and my child does not attend?
- Will I have to pay when you take vacation? How many paid vacation days do you take each year?