



# Child Care Checklist



Parents—This checklist is a guide to help you look for quality childcare, and should help you get started in developing your provider interview questions.

## Telephone Interview

- ⇒ Are you registered with the state?
- ⇒ Do you have any openings?
- ⇒ How many children do you care for at one time?
- ⇒ Do you have children of your own in care? How many?
- ⇒ What ages do you accept?
- ⇒ What are your hours? Are they flexible?
- ⇒ How much do you charge, part time, full time, hourly, weekly, monthly?
- ⇒ Are there late charges? If yes, how much?
- ⇒ Do you accept DHS payment?
- ⇒ Do you offer transportation? What is the cost? Where do you transport? Do you have insurance incase of an accident? Do you have enough car seats and/or seatbelts for all children?

## Home Interview Topics

### General Questions

- ⇒ Why do you do child care?
- ⇒ What do you like the most about child care?
- ⇒ What do you like least?

### Business Organization

- ⇒ Does the provider seem on the ball?
- ⇒ Does the provider have written policies and procedures?
- ⇒ Does the provider have a file for each child?
- ⇒ Does the provider offer a questionnaire regarding the likes and dislikes of your child?
- ⇒ Does the provider keep emergency information about your child in an accessible location?
- ⇒ Does the provider follow a daily schedule?

### Discipline

- ⇒ What type of discipline is used?
- ⇒ What happens if a child is caught hitting another child?
- ⇒ What if a child has an accident in their pants?
- ⇒ What happens if a child doesn't do what s/he is told?
- ⇒ What happens when the child is crying and will not stop?

## Safety

- ⇒ Are there emergency numbers by the phone?
- ⇒ Is the home/center clean? Floors clean of debris? Bathroom clean? Are children's toys clean? Are kitchen facilities clean and orderly? Children's sleeping and play area clean?
- ⇒ Are all plug-in sockets covered?
- ⇒ Are there child-proof gates where needed?
- ⇒ Is there a fire escape plan posted?
- ⇒ Are all poisons/hazards stored away in locked cabinets?
- ⇒ Is the outside yard/play area free from hazards?
- ⇒ What is the outside playtime monitoring policy?
- ⇒ If taken on field trips, is there extra adult supervision? Is there notice given to the parents before the event? How are they to be transported—car, walking, etc?
- ⇒ Are there any other adults in the home during child care hours? Who? Have they gone through the background check (If the provider is registered/listed)? Does this person interact with the children? Can you meet this other person?
- ⇒ Are you allowed to stop by or have some one else stop by for a check-up?
- ⇒ What are their policies about who picks up your child?

## Food

- ⇒ Does the provider practice good hygiene? (Hand washing, teeth brushing b/a meals)
- ⇒ Is the provider on the USDA food program?
- ⇒ If **YES**,
- ⇒ Is there a weekly menu that is posted?
- ⇒ What is typical day of meals/snacks?
- ⇒ Do parents need to supplement additional snacks?
- ⇒ Will the provider purchase foods that meet your child's dietary needs?

### ⇒ If NO

- ⇒ Does the provider supply the food?
- ⇒ If provider doesn't supply the food, what does the parent need to bring?
- ⇒ Is there adequate refrigeration or do you need to bring a frozen pack?
- ⇒ Is there a posted list of allergies for each child?

### Activities

- ⇒ Are there age appropriate toys?
- ⇒ Are there age appropriate planned activities?
- ⇒ How much free play are the children allowed?
- ⇒ What does the outside/inside play area look like?
- ⇒ If the provider offers movies/TV time, what do the children watch? Are the movies appropriate for small children? How many hours do they watch? Are the movies something that you would watch at home? Is the provider willing to not watch a video if it is offensive to you?

### Rest Time

- ⇒ Where are the children going to have rest time? Are there cots? Is there a separate room? If you have an infant, are there cribs? If so, is the crib new or older? Do the bars meet safety standards? What is placed in the cribs with infants?
- ⇒ Are there baby monitors?
- ⇒ Is there a playpen for infant sleeping, and is this also up to safety standards?
- ⇒ How long is rest time?
- ⇒ Are naps mandatory?
- ⇒ What are the alternatives to rest time for children who do not take naps?

### Credentials

- ⇒ Is the provider registered with the state? How long has the provider been state registered?
- ⇒ How long has provider been doing child care?
- ⇒ Has provider taken any early childhood education classes?
- ⇒ Does provider have references?

### Centers

- ⇒ Is the center registered through the state, or exempt? (Please see child care regulations for explanation of differences/requirements)
- ⇒ What is the staff turn-over rate?
- ⇒ How long has the site director been at that particular center? Can you talk with him/her?
- ⇒ Can you meet the teachers and aides that will be in your child's classroom?
- ⇒ What are the center's hiring policies?
- ⇒ What minimum child care experience is required to be hired?
- ⇒ Do center workers go through a background check?
- ⇒ Are drop-in visits allowed?
- ⇒ How many children per adult staff member?
- ⇒ Do rooms or barriers separate age groups?

### Ask Yourself...

1. What does your gut feeling say about the provider or center?
2. Will you feel comfortable leaving your child there?
3. Do you feel welcome? If visiting a center, were you acknowledged immediately?
4. How did the provider/center staff react to your child? To you?
5. How did the provider/center staff react to the other children in the child care setting while you were there? Did they show interest and concern for the other children?
6. How did the other children react to the provider/center staff?
7. How did your child react to the provider/center staff?
8. Did you child feel comfortable enough to go off and play?

