Child Care Checklist

Steps in Choosing Child Care

- ✓ Make a list of things important to you and your child.
- ✓ Call the prospective provider/program to screen for basic requirements and current openings.
- ✓ Visit multiple providers/programs, various times of the day for comparisons.
- ✓ Ask for and check provider/program references.
- ✓ Read through the printed policies and procedures.

Basic Considerations:

- ✓ The provider/program is licensed or authorized as license exempt.
- ✓ The location is convenient. Transportation is available (if needed).
- ✓ The provider is open during the hours I need care.
- ✓ Financial assistance is available (if needed).
- ✓ The provider fee is _____ per _____. The fee includes: meals, diapers etc.
- ✓ I understand the policies for when the provider will be closed for holidays or vacations.
- ✓ I understand the policy if my child is ill and cannot attend or the provider is ill.
- ✓ Parents are free to visit at any time during the day.
- ✓ The provider/program is accredited.
- ✓ The provider has low staff turnover.
- ✓ I am comfortable with the provider/program view on ethnic/cultural backgrounds, religion and behavior management.

Caregiver Qualities:

- ✓ I feel comfortable communicating with the caregiver. S/he is warm and welcoming.
- ✓ S/he understands and enjoys children my child's age.
- ✓ S/he has early childhood training and experience.
- ✓ I am comfortable with the caregivers' philosophy.

Notes:

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Choosing child care can be among the toughest decisions for a parent. Ask yourself if you feel your child will be comfortable and happy. Trust your instincts.

Program and Space:

Notes:

- ✓ Space is clean and inviting.
- ✓ There is adequate indoor/outdoor space.
- ✓ There is a variety of age appropriate toys and equipment for children.
- ✓ All playground equipment is sturdy and in good condition.
- ✓ Toys are washed and disinfected regularly.

Tips by Age Group

Infants/Toddlers

- ✓ Caregivers responsive, nurturing and clearly enjoy babies.
- ✓ There are clean, comfortable sleeping, eating, diapering and play areas.
- ✓ If the parent is nursing, the caregiver is responsive and accommodating.
- ✓ Children are able to function on individual schedules.
- ✓ Space is stimulating to allow active toddlers to safely explore their environment.

Preschoolers

- ✓ There are planned activities that are interesting and engaging to the children.
- ✓ There is a daily schedule with opportunities for active and quiet play, as well as outdoor play.
- ✓ There are a variety of materials such as books, blocks, puzzles, games, dramatic play props and art supplies.
- ✓ Children access toys and materials on their own at appropriate times during the day.

School-ager

- ✓ The space reflects the work and interests of the children and youth in the program.
- ✓ Children and youth are involved in the selection of activities.
- ✓ There are a variety of activities such as art, music, science, sports, field trips, and homework help.
- ✓ Caregiver is engaged in activities and conversation with the children and youth.
- ✓ Children and youth in the program appear happy.

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