

SELECTING A QUALITY CHILD CARE CENTER

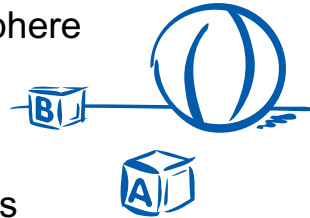
Choosing a child care center is one of the most important decisions you will make for your child. Before selecting a center, visit and ask yourself these questions:

ARE THE TEACHERS:

- Warm?
- Affectionate?
- Responsible?
- Safety-conscious?
- Loving toward children?
- Trustworthy?
- Honest?
- Creative?
- Educated in child development?
- Experienced?
- Relaxed and calm?
- Enthusiastic?
- Healthy?
- Supported by their director?

OBSERVE THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT. LOOK FOR:

- Variety of play materials
- Large supply of play materials
- Different learning centers (for example: blocks, art, music, books, science, imaginary play, climber, puzzles & games)
- Pictures on walls at child's eye level
- Quiet areas in room
- Bright atmosphere
- Soft furniture
- Cleanliness
- Prevention of safety hazards



OBSERVE THE PLAYGROUND. LOOK FOR:

- Large area of green grass for running and playing
- Safe equipment
- Variety of climbers and toys
- High fence surrounding entire playground

QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DIRECTOR AND TEACHERS CONCERNING EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

- Do children have large segments of time for free play?
- Do children go outside at least twice a day?
- Do teachers give five- to 10-minute reminders before a new activity begins?
- Do teachers move children in small groups to new activities instead of moving the entire class at once?
- Is there a teacher in the room at all times?
- Do teachers make routine activities (hand-washing, eating, diaper changes) fun and educational?
- Do teachers use an educational curriculum for planning activities and monitoring the development of children?
- What is the teacher-to-child ratio? (children need individualized attention)
- What is the total group size per classroom?



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE DIRECTOR AND TEACHERS CONCERNING CENTER POLICIES AND SAFETY:

- ✓ What is the sick child policy?
- ✓ Do teachers have access to emergency information?
- ✓ Are diaper tables washed and bleached after each use?
- ✓ Do teachers wash hands regularly, especially after diapering and wiping a child's nose?
- ✓ Are doors leading to outside areas locked when not in use?
- ✓ Are fire drills conducted monthly?
- ✓ Are sign-in and sign-out sheets kept for attendance records?
- ✓ What are the emergency procedures for fire, an injured child, severe weather, etc.?
- ✓ Is the center affordable?
- ✓ Is the center convenient?
- ✓ May parents drop in to visit?
- ✓ Do teachers and director respect multi-cultural families?
- ✓ Do teachers plan safe field trips and include parent participation?

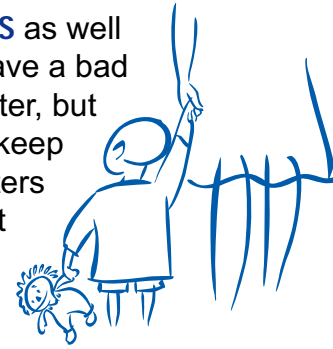
HOW CAN YOU FIND ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS?

1. VISIT! While visiting the center, talk to the director and teachers. Call and make an appointment if you want to speak at length with the director and teachers.

2. OBSERVE! Ask the director if you can drop in at an unannounced time.

3. TALK to families already using the center.

4. USE YOUR FEELINGS as well as the facts. If you have a bad feeling about the center, but you're not sure why, keep looking for other centers until you find one that feels right.



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON
SELECTING QUALITY CHILD CARE,
CONTACT YOUR COUNTY
EXTENSION OFFICE OR CALL:**

**TENNESSEE'S CHILD CARE
RESOURCE AND REFERRAL
SERVICE
1-800-462-8261**

**MATT DEVEREAUX,
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
1-865-974-7193**

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