

Choosing Child Care

Finding the best child care provider for your family.



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The Choice

Choosing the right child care provider is a BIG decision. You need to feel that your child is safe and that they are in a fun, educational environment. An important step in choosing the right child care for your family is touring the child care setting and getting to know the caregiver and program. It is the responsibility of each parent to evaluate each child care facility and interview each child care provider to make sure they choose the optimal child care provider for their family.

The Checklist

We have assembled the following guide to help make your child care decision easier. The guide consists of six areas:

- Facility
- Policies
- Caregiver
- Ratio
- Content
- Contract



These are all important areas to observe when visiting a child care facility. It is good practice to visit and compare at least three child care facilities before you make your decision. Parents should spend around an hour observing each facility. Use our checklist to keep track at each facility of the areas that are excellent and those that need improvement.



The Child Care Resource Center's Mission

The CCRC is your "one-stop shop" in North Central Ohio working to educate and impact the quality of child care by:

- Helping families make informed child care choices
- Recruiting, training and supporting child care professionals
- Leading, advocating and collaborating at the local, state, and national level
- Collecting and disseminating data to inform decision makers

The CCRC was created to help parents and families of all income levels find high quality child care. We are dedicated to the development of high quality child care services, increasing the accessibility of child care programs, and promoting the recognition of childcare as a vital profession that helps strengthen our community.

Use the CCRC as a Resource

We believe that every family should have the opportunity and resources to find quality child care for their family. Our program offers information for parents such as the differences between home-based care and center-based care, how to pay for child care, and much more. Visit our website for answers to your questions:

Questions to ask a potential provider before you visit:

- ✓ Is there an opening for my child?
- ✓ What hours and days are you open and where are you located?
- ✓ How much does care cost? Is financial assistance available?
- ✓ How many children are in your care?
- ✓ What age groups do you serve?
- ✓ Do you provide transportation?
- ✓ Do you provide meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks)?
- ✓ Do you have a license, accreditation, or other certification?
- ✓ When can I come to visit and can I bring my child when I visit?



Visit the programs:

- ✓ Understand that finding a quality child care provider takes time, don't rush it
- ✓ Visit at least three child care provider options
- ✓ Observe each provider for at least one hour
- ✓ Visit your choice with your child
- ✓ Know how you are going to pay for childcare (For help visit the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services at: <http://jfs.ohio.gov>)
- ✓ Ask for references from current and past clients
- ✓ Bring your checklist to keep track of your visits

After your child is in care

- ✓ Tell the caregiver any changes in your child's health or well-being
- ✓ Communicate to the caregiver if you have any concerns
- ✓ Show appreciation for your child's caregiver
- ✓ Get involved with the program
(go on field trips, go to board meetings)
- ✓ Visit the facility when you can
- ✓ Get to know other families at the facility

Program

It is important that both the parent and child feel comfortable in the child care program.

Check:

- ✓ Were you greeted warmly at the door/ on the phone?
- ✓ Is the program's license visible?
- ✓ Is the center/home clean?
- ✓ Is the center/home cheerful and enjoyable?
- ✓ Are there designated changing and food prep stations?
- ✓ Are there proper safety precautions? (smoke detectors, covered electrical outlets, first aid supplies)
- ✓ Are they serving nutritious foods?
- ✓ Is there plenty of space to play both in and outside?
- ✓ Is the program accredited?

Accreditation

Accredited programs go beyond the minimum licensing standards. These programs have gone through extra assessment and approval by professionals. Two accreditation resources are the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for child care centers and National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) for family child care homes.

Caregivers

Caregivers play the most critical role in your child's well-being while being in child care. It is important to observe the caregivers intently.

Check:

- ✓ Do they have facial expressions that show they are happy to be there?
- ✓ Is their tone of voice soothing and pleasant?
- ✓ Do they encourage the children?
- ✓ Do they show patience?
- ✓ Do they play with the children?
- ✓ What training do they have? (CPR, First Aid, Nutrition, Child Abuse and Neglect, Child Development, College Degrees)



Ratio

Smaller group sizes tend to be better than larger ones because the caregivers can offer higher quality care for each child.

Check:

- ✓ How many caregivers to children are there?
- ✓ Are children given individual attention?
- ✓ Does the facility meet Ohio Law?

Ohio Law For Child Care Centers

One Adult for every...

- Five infants (under 12 months)
- Six infants (12 to 18 months)
- Seven toddlers (12 to 18 months)
- Eight toddlers (30 to 36 months)
- 12 three year-olds
- 14 four year-olds
- 18 school-aged children under the age of eleven

Ohio Law For Home-Based Child Care

- Type B: a maximum of six children, including the care-giver's own children under the age of six, with no more than three children under the age of two.
- Type A: (7-12 children) The home must be licensed by the state and have a second caregiver. (ask to see license and current inspection reports)



Policies

Make sure that the facility's policies and philosophies line up with your family's.

Check:

- ✓ What is the facility's policy on parents visiting unannounced?
- ✓ Does the facility have a parent handbook?
- ✓ What is the facility's philosophy on child discipline?
- ✓ What is the policy for mildly or moderately ill children?
- ✓ What is the policy on holidays and vacations?
- ✓ If you have questions, comments, or concerns where should you direct them?
- ✓ How will updates about your child be communicated to you?

Content

The content of programs should help your child develop socially, mentally, and physically.

Check:

- ✓ Is the child's day structured?
- ✓ Are the activities fun?
- ✓ Do the activities have educational value?
- ✓ Is there a balance of active and quiet activities?
- ✓ Are the toys and materials developmentally appropriate for the different age groups?
- ✓ Does the program often add new toys and activities?
- ✓ Do the children go on field trips?
- ✓ Is the facility involved with Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)?

Step Up To Quality (SUTQ):

Step Up to Quality is Ohio's voluntary rating system. SUTQ measures, monitors, and promotes high quality child care. The program standards include implementation of research-based curriculum, education and professional development requirements for staff.

Contract

It is encouraged to write down everything agreed upon between parent and facility to make sure there is a mutual understanding.

Check:

- ✓ What is the cost, method of payment, and insurance?
- ✓ Are there late fees?
- ✓ What are the pickup times / arrival times?
- ✓ What is the plan in case of emergency?
- ✓ Are other family members allowed to pick up your child from care?



Checklist For Choosing Care

Program	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
Were you greeted warmly?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are the program's licenses visible?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is the center/home clean?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is the center/home cheerful and enjoyable?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are there designated changing and food prep stations?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are they serving nutritious foods?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is there plenty of space to play inside?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is there plenty of space to play outside?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is the program nationally accredited?	Y N	Y N	Y N

Caregivers	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
Do they have happy facial expressions?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is their tone of voice soothing and pleasant?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do they encourage children?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do they show patience?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do they play with the children on their level?	Y N	Y N	Y N
What training do they have?	_____	_____	_____

Policies	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
Are parents encouraged to visit unannounced?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Does the facility have a parent handbook?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do you agree with their child discipline policy?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do you know who to direct your questions to?	Y N	Y N	Y N
How will you be updated about your child?	_____	_____	_____

Ratio	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
How many children per adult are there?	_____	_____	_____
Are children given individual attention?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Does the facility meet Ohio Law for child ratios?	Y N	Y N	Y N

Content	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
Is the child's day structured?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are the activities fun?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do the activities have educational value?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is there a balance of active and quiet activities?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are the toys and materials developmentally appropriate for the different age groups?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do the children go on field trips?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Is the facility involved with Step Up To Quality (SUTQ)?	Y N	Y N	Y N

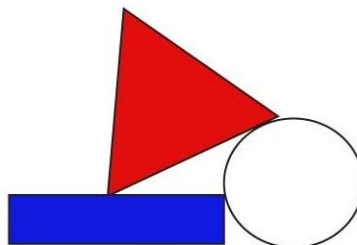
Contract	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
Does the cost and method of payment meet your family's needs?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are there late fees?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Do the pickup and arrival times meet your family's needs?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are you comfortable with the facility's plan in case of emergency?	Y N	Y N	Y N
Are other family members allowed to pick your child up from child care?	Y N	Y N	Y N

Overall Quality	Program #1	Program # 2	Program #3
Rate the overall quality (1-poor, 10-excellent)	_____	_____	_____
Comments			

**For more information
and resources on
child care**

Visit: www.crcinc.com

Or Call: 440-960-7187



Child Care Resource Center

The Child Care Resource Center:
5350 Oberlin Ave. Lorain, OH 44053
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