

# CHILD CARE CHECKLIST FOR PARENTS

## Choosing Child Care

Selecting child care for your child is a big responsibility. The type of care that your child receives during the day will impact the type of person he or she becomes. The following is presented to you to use as a guide in evaluating the child care arrangements for your child. It is just that – a guide. It was developed using state licensing and registration requirements and accepted practices of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Using this and other considerations, you as the parent, must decide what you want for your child.

As the parent, you should visit the child care facility several times before deciding to allow them to care for your child. Visit at different times of the day and go unannounced. If you are not welcomed into the facility, be concerned. Stay and observe what the children are doing. Watch and listen to how the adults talk to the children. Listen for the sounds the children are making. Do you hear laughter, questioning and conversation or do you hear shouting, crying and silence? How do you as the adult feel while you are there? Do you feel respected and welcome?

### How Does Your Child's Day Care Stack Up?

**The following is a checklist of observable behaviors to consider when selecting a childcare facility for your child. Go through the checklist and record either yes or no beside each item. Make yourself notes in the comment section. You probably will not see everything the first time you visit, so plan on several trips. Count the number of yes marks that you have recorded. Then compare the number to the ratings below.**

**57-47 “yes” checks** – This child care arrangement appears to be following practices that most Early Childhood professionals feel enhances the positive development of young children. Good choice on your part as a parent.

**46-36 “yes” checks** – This child care arrangement is doing many things that advocates for young children feel are important. Ask the provider about the items you checked no on to begin a conversation to help you decide how important these items are to you.

**35-25 “yes” checks** -This child care arrangement is not following practices as established through research on what is best for young children. Use the checklist to talk with the provider to determine if improvements can be made.

**Less than 25 “yes” checks** – This child care arrangement is perhaps minimal in meeting the needs of young children. Doesn't your child deserve better?

This checklist is to be used as a guide and is not an endorsement of any program. You as the parent are responsible for any decision regarding childcare arrangements for your child. This checklist is provided by the Scott County Community Empowerment Board as an aid in your search for child care. For more information about Empowerment and services for children birth to five years, go to <http://www.scottcountykids.org>

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Questions	YES	NO	Comments
<b>Qualifications</b>			
Is the center licensed and is the license displayed?			
Is the center or home accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children?			
Is the family day care home registered with the Department of Human Services?			
Does the Director or Provider have a degree or special training in Early Childhood Education?			
Is the staff/provider required to attend training regularly? What kinds of trainings do they attend?			
Are there professional books and resources available for the staff/provider?			
Do teacher/child ratios meet or exceed state requirements?  <u>In Iowa Childcare Centers</u> One adult for every 4 babies One adult for every 6 two yr olds One adult for every 8 three yr olds One adult for every 12 four yr olds One adult for every 15 five yr olds.  <u>In Iowa Family Daycare Homes</u> Maximum of 4 under 24 months Maximum of 4 school age children No more than 6 under school age.			
Is there adequate space for my child to play and explore freely?			
<b>Safety Consideration</b>			
Is someone trained in CPR and first aid always present?			
Are thorough reference checks conducted on all child care providers and in the case of family day care homes all those persons living in the home?			
Is there a security system in place that restricts access of strangers to the facility?			
Are well-defined written emergency procedures in place?			
Is the environment safe, clean and oriented to children?			
Will my child nap in a place that is quiet and safe?			
Is there a strict and enforced policy in place for releasing children to people other than their parents/guardians?			
Is there an open door policy that encourages parents to visit the facility at any time?			
<b>Health Considerations</b>			
Is there a regular cleaning schedule for all areas of the facility or home? (Centers should be use a professional cleaning service)			

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Questions	YES	NO	Comments
Are toys and materials disinfected on a regular basis?			
Are consistent, classroom-specific efforts made to limit illnesses from spreading?			
Do caregivers wash hands regularly (after diapering, toileting, blowing noses, and before handling food)?			
Are children required to wash their hands often? (After toileting, blowing noses, playing outside, before eating?)			
Are medications stored out of the reach of children and administered properly?			
Does the facility or home require me to provide a physical and immunization records in order to enroll?			
Does the center or home know who to call in case of an emergency for my child?			
Is there a place for children who don't feel well to be isolated from other children?			
Are safety precautions in place regarding any animals in the childcare facility?			
<b>Outdoor Play Area</b>			
Is the outdoor play area fenced?			
Are there grassy areas and hard surfaces for children to play on outside?			
Is the outdoor play area equipment in good condition with no peeling paint, rust or splinters?			
<b>Nutrition</b>			
Does the facility serve nutritious snacks and meals?			
Are menus posted?			
Do caregivers sit with the children at mealtimes to model appropriate manners, interactions, nutritious choices, and the positive social nature of mealtimes?			
Are children encouraged to feed themselves and be independent during meal times?			
<b>Communication</b>			
Does the program have a new child orientation session?			
Is positive guidance used in the classroom or home? (no punishment used which humiliates, frightens, causes pain or discomfort to the children)			
Does parent participation and communication play an integral role in the guidance process?			
Are disruptive reactions responded to quickly and with understanding to maintain a positive atmosphere in the classroom?			
Will I be included in solutions for any behavioral issues or problems experienced by my child?			

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Questions	YES	NO	Comments
<b>Character Development</b>			
Are children spoken to in kind, loving voices that promote self-esteem, confidence and independence?			
Are my family's cultural values respected and incorporated in the curriculum?			
Are children encouraged to try new things and challenge themselves?			
Do children receive positive reinforcement for accomplishing goals?			
Do the same people take care of my child all day long so that he can establish a loving relationship with his caregivers?			
Do the children in the program seem relaxed and happy?			
<b>Activities</b>			
Are children offered a variety of meaningful learning choices throughout the day?			
Are there enough toys for my child to use during the day that he will not be bored?			
Is the schedule of the day posted, flexible and follows the needs of the child?			
Are there activities that are geared to the needs of children of different ages, abilities, and learning styles?			
Are caregivers involved with children in a variety of roles: direct instruction, facilitation, cooperative learning?			
Are caregivers sitting on the floor with the children and interacting with them?			
Are books available and accessible at all times for children to read?			
Will staff read to my child upon request?			
Is television viewing not more than two hours per day?			
Is there frequent and consistent communication between staff and parents regarding the developmental progress of children, as well as regularly scheduled conferences?			
<b>Travel Safety</b>			
Are field trips offered for preschool and school-age children?			
Is my permission required to take my child away from the childcare facility?			
Are extra adults required to accompany children on field trips?			
Are children required to be in car seats and seat belts while being transported?			
<b>TOTAL</b>			