

Choosing Quality Child Care

Choosing a good child care center is one of the most important thing you can do for your child. How do you evaluate the various child care centers and make the right choice? For starters, be sure to plan a day where both you and your child can visit the facilities and observe first-hand activities for your child's age. Bring a checklist and plan your questions. In the end, it's the facility in which you feel most comfortable and your child seems most positive about that could end up being the right choice.

Choosing a Child Care Center

There are several advantages to having your child in a child care center. Good centers have a mix of activities that will teach different skills. Projects that lead to creativity, storytelling, dancing, and singing all help the child learn instead of just playing all day. Children also get to socialize with other children.

To assist you in finding the appropriate child care center, we have listed steps below that will guide you through finding a good child care center and noticing the signs of a good child care center.



Finding a good child care center

Make a list of what's important to you. Do you want a center close to home? Close to work? Do you want your children to be with several children or prefer smaller groups?

Once you have a list of possible centers, call them on the phone and ask some preliminary questions. You should ask about their policies, hours, fees, activities, and philosophies on teaching children. Are they flexible to help you with your schedule? Will they accommodate your special requests? What is their teacher to child ratio? Do they change activities frequently? Do they have experienced teachers?

Take you child to the center for a visit. Observe how your child acts in the environment and around the teachers. Does your child seem comfortable? Do you think your child would be happy at the center?

Signs of a good child care center

Caring and qualified staff: The staff should be enthusiastic and interact with the children in a positive way that shows they really care. The staff should have a philosophy about discipline, feeding and sleeping that follows your philosophy.

Safe, clean facility: A good center has floors, walls, bathrooms, kitchen and changing stations that are clean, well lit, and ventilated.

A complete schedule of activities: Good centers will have a schedule that allows for play time, quiet time, individual activities, meals, snacks, and group activities. One thing that should not be included in a good schedule is TV and videos. A good center teaches a wide variety of topics, while at the same time, teaching things appropriate for the age group. Also look for toys that are appropriate for the age of your child.



Checklist for Quality

During your visit to the center, use this list as a guide for questions you should ask and things you should watch for:

Does the center hold a current Colorado license?

Were you and your child given a good tour, including time for your child to interact with their potential group?

Was your child comfortable and secure in the center?

Did you notice a variety of activities?

Were the activities and toys age appropriate?

Did the teachers interact often with the children?

Was a schedule for each group posted?



THINGS I LIKED:

THINGS I DIDN'T LIKE:



SAFETY

Did the school have procedures in case of emergencies?

Does the center seem safe?

Do the teachers have current training in CPR and First Aid?

Was the center clean and well maintained?

How does the center/school communicate with you regarding

your child's progress, daily events, or special information such as accidents or illness?

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Are the director and staff qualified as directed by the state?

Do the center director and staff receive continuing training regularly?

Is the center accredited by a national organization?



**Early Childhood Education
Association of Colorado**
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Still have questions or need information?

Contact the Early Childhood Education
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