

**14 Factors To Consider  
When Choosing A Learning Center  
For Your Child**



**Presented By:**

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## 1. Hours of Operation

You need to have enough time to drop your child off in the morning and still be able to get to work or appointments on time. A childcare center should be open early enough for you to do that. The center should also be open late enough so that you are not rushing from work.



## 2. Meals and Snacks

Making sure your child has the proper nutrition throughout the day is an important factor in choosing a childcare center. Make sure to ask the following questions regarding nutrition:

- Do you provide all snacks, breakfast and lunch?
- If they do provide snacks, breakfast and lunch, can they give examples of what will be given to my child?
- Does the center serve low-fat or soy milk, and whole or multi-grain products instead of white flour products? Is fresh fruit served?
- How will the food be prepared?
- How are food allergies handled?
- If they do not provide snacks and lunch, what types of food would they recommend to pack for my child? Can they heat up lunches if necessary?



### 3. Daily Schedule

What does a typical day look like? What types of activities will your child participate in? Is a daily schedule available for parents? Getting an idea of the daily schedule will help you determine whether your child will enjoy his or her day.



### 4. Communication

How does the staff communicate with parents about what is going? How will they report to you about any problems they are having? Do they encourage feedback from parents? How would they like to receive feedback? Open communication can help improve your child's overall experience.



## 5. Discipline Philosophy

It is important to know how the staff will handle misbehavior. What system is in place to discipline children and teach them right from wrong? Does the staff avoid yelling, spanking, or other negative punishments? Negative behavior sets bad examples for children. What positive reinforcement and redirection tools does the center use? Using positive reinforcement techniques and redirection helps to prevent future misbehavior.



## 6. Training, Licensing, Credentials, and Accreditation

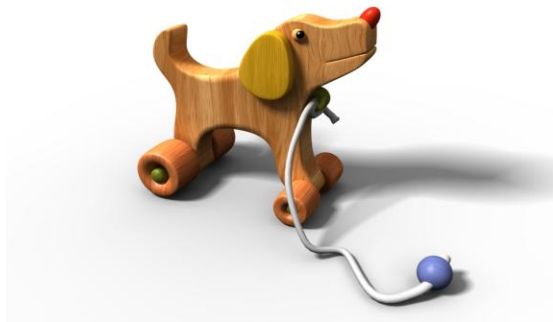
A well-educated and experienced staff will provide high quality interactions and activities for your child. Make sure to ask the following questions when looking at a childcare center:

- Does the director have experience caring for children?
- Who is on staff? Is there a place to view staff biographies?
- How is the staff screened?
- Does each staff member have the right credentials and experience?
- Does someone have current CPR and first aid training?
- How does the childcare center conduct its own training on an ongoing basis?
- Does the staff continue to receive training about the changes in childcare industry?



## 7. The Facility

Make sure to inspect the layout of the facility for cleanliness and organization. Is the layout open for children to play and crawl? Also, look for cleanliness and ask about the daily cleaning routine. Does the facility have an outside cleaning crew/company coming in at night to clean the center?



## 8. Equipment, Toys and Learning Tools and Instruments

There should be a variety of toys and learning tools and instruments for kids of every age. Make sure to ask about any sports or playground equipment and look at the condition of each to make sure they are safe and age appropriate.



### **9. Attitude/Energy**

Is the staff warm and welcoming? Do they pay individual attention to each child? When you walk in the facility, is it total chaos when you walk in? Children will thrive in an environment that is controlled, engaging and supportive.



### **10. Recommendations by Others**

One of the best ways to measure the quality of a childcare center is by asking other parents for a referral. Does the center have a good percentage of children enrolled who were referred by other parents? Ask other enrolled parents about the experience their children are having and if they are satisfied with the quality of service, or check for parent testimonials on the center's website to hear what enrolled families are saying. Does the center do an annual parent survey to get parent feedback? If so, can you see the results of these surveys to know what existing parents are feeling?



### **11. Staff Turnover**

High staff turnover can negatively affect your child. Young children thrive on consistency. The constant turnover of staff members interrupts a child's schedule and routine. Building a trusting relationship with someone and having consistency helps make a child's day go much easier.



### **12. Safety & Security**

Inquire about how medicines, cleaning supplies, and other poisonous materials are stored. Ask if the center has secure doors, strong safety gates, and a plan in case of disasters. Also, ask each childcare center to explain who has access to the facility and how people can leave and enter the building. Does the center have a security keypad at the entrance to discourage strangers from entering? What kind of log in and log out process do they have?



### **13. Parent Handbook**

Every childcare center should have policies and procedures in place. Before choosing a center, make sure to ask for a parent handbook and look through it. A parent handbook should have all the childcare center's policies and procedures. Anything a parent needs to know should be in the handbook. If a childcare center does not have a parent handbook, then you may not know what is going on.



### **14. Curriculum**

Familiarize yourself with each childcare center's curriculum. Ask each center how it prepares children for school. Are the teachers required to create a lesson plan for their class? Ask about the reasoning behind the chosen curriculum and its advantages. Compare the different curriculums to each other and decide which one would benefit your child the most. The time your child spends each day at the childcare center will help to establish a lifetime foundation and enthusiasm for learning.



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***We look forward to getting to know your child!***

**Thank you!**