

Parents Know Best...

Choosing Infant and Toddler Child Care

Looking for Quality Infant & Toddler Care

Placing a child under age three in child care is a big step (*that you may have mixed feelings about*). It may help you to know that research studies have shown that babies can be in child care without damaging their development or their love for their parents *if the child care settings are of high quality*.

When selecting a child care provider for your infant or toddler, be sure to interview and observe several providers before making your choice.

Things to Consider:

Does the Child Care Provider...

- Appear to be warm and friendly?
- Seem calm and gentle?
- Treat each infant and toddler as an individual with a different personality?
- Accept and respect your family and cultural values?
- Read and talk with the children?
- Encourage infants and toddlers to express themselves?
- Have previous experience working with infants and toddlers?
- Have training in child development?
- Share your attitudes and methods of guiding and controlling behavior?
- Serve nutritious meals and snacks?
- Expect to take time to discuss your children with you regularly?
- Express pride in the job of caring for infants and toddlers?

Are There Opportunities for Infants and Toddlers to...

- Receive individual attention?
- Experience their environment by feeling, seeing and hearing?
- Use simple books, puzzles, pictures, games and toys regularly?
- Jump, run and dance in-and out-of-doors?
- Safely roll, sit and crawl?

Does the Child Care Facility Have...

- A clean and comfortable look?
- Space for all the children?
- Cribs and space for each child to nap?
- A “childproof” environment for safe exploration?

- A locked cabinet for storage of medicine, cleaners and poisons?
- Adequate high chairs for meal times?
- Appropriate toilet training equipment and facilities?

Do You Feel That...

- Being in this child care setting will be a happy experience for your infant or toddler?
- You can develop a relaxed, sharing relationship with the child care provider?

Be Sure To Discuss:

- The total fees to be paid
- A plan for an emergency or a child's illness
- Who will provide food for formula and snacks and how many meals will be served
- Who supplies diapers and other care needs
- What time children will arrive and leave the day care home

Appropriate Care for Infants and Toddlers

Infants and toddlers learn by experiencing their environment – by seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, feeling and by physically moving around. They learn a sense of trust through interaction with consistent caring adults.

Care givers meet the physical needs of the young children in their care and spend time holding, playing and talking with infants. Toddlers are given opportunities to explore in a child safe environment.

Toilet training, feeding and dressing are taught without criticism and children are encouraged to do for themselves.

Age appropriate equipment such as cribs, toilet seats, high chairs and stimulating manipulatives (*crib gyms, colored pictures, blocks, pull toys and stacking containers*) are provided.

Parents Know Best...

Choosing a child care arrangement is one of the most important decisions made by parents. Although there are many different child care options, only parents, who after all know their child best, should make this decision.

No one kind of child care is best for all children. Some children do well in a center-based group program. Others need a more home-like setting provided by a family day care home. Some children are best served in their own home. No matter what the setting, the key factor in choosing a child care arrangement is quality.

High Quality Child Care Should Offer...

- **CAREGIVERS** who are knowledgeable, loving and nurturing and who will work with you to provide the best possible care for your child.
- **ENVIRONMENTS** that are safe and friendly, and provide for the healthy growth and development of your child.
- **ACTIVITIES** that are both formal and informal and are appropriate for your child's age and developmental level.