

# **Parents Know Best...**

## **Choosing School-age Child Care**

### **Looking for Quality in School-age Care**

When selecting a child care arrangement for your school-ager, be sure to interview and observe several providers before making your choice.

#### **Things to Consider:**

##### ***Does the School-age Care Provider...***

- Appear to be warm and friendly?
- Seem calm and gentle?
- Treat each child as an individual with a different personality?
- Accept and respect your family and cultural values?
- Read and talk with the children?
- Encourage children to express themselves?
- Have previous experience working with school-age children?
- 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 school-age children?

##### ***Are There Opportunities for Children to...***

- Make friends with other children?
- Receive individual attention?
- Use books, creative materials, games and equipment regularly?
- Play actively and quietly in-and out-of-doors?
- Study and do homework?

##### ***Does the School-age Facility Have...***

- A clean and comfortable look?
- Space for all the children?
- Enough caregivers for the number of children?
- A balanced daily program that allows for differences in children?
- Adequate heat, light, ventilation and bathroom facilities?
- Equipment and furniture designed for older children?

### ***Do You Feel That...***

- Being in this school-age child care setting will be a happy experience for your child?
- You can develop a relaxed, sharing relationship with the school-age 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 meals and snacks
- How children will get to and from the facility
- What time children will arrive and leave the facility
- Your responsibilities to the facility in paying fees, attending conferences and other activities
- Special arrangements for school holidays or vacations
- Any special characteristics of your child, such as food preferences, habits, allergies and special medical needs
- The name, address and phone number of your child's school

### **Appropriate Care for School-age Children**

*Active supervision – including planned enriching and recreational activities for school-age children in the hours before and after school and when school is not in session – may be offered by family day care homes, centers, public schools, recreation districts, youth organizations and other community group.*

Quality after-school programs establish an environment that encourages growth and development of the whole child.

Staff understand how children grow and develop between five and 12 years of age, and:

- **Select** activities that are appropriate for each age group
- **Utilize** guidance and discipline techniques that are appropriate for older children
- **Realize** the importance of fostering growth in all four developmental areas- *physical, mental, social and emotional*

### **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.