National Association for the Education of Young Children
Tips for Choosing Early Education and Child Care Centers

The following guidelines, based on the Early Childhood Program Standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, can help you identify high-quality early care and education programs for your young children.

Preschool and child care programs should focus on children:

- Watch to see that children interact with other children and adults, so they can build healthy relationships.
- Ask about the curriculum, which should include a variety of activities appropriate for the children’s ages and needs.

Preschool and child care programs should have qualified staff:

- The staff should have the educational background to promote your child’s learning and development. Ask what degrees and training teachers have.
- Ask how long teachers and staff have been with the program. Teachers that stay in the program longer are more able to focus their attention on the children and establish bonds with them.

Preschool and child care programs should build relationships with families:

- Program staff should work with your family to meet your child’s needs. Ask how information and concerns are communicated between staff and families.
- Check that the program’s policies allow families to visit their children during the program day.

Preschool and child care programs should be well-run:

- Check that the program is licensed by the state. The facilities need to be age-appropriate and well maintained, both indoors and outdoors.
- Check whether the program has policies and practices to help keep children safe from preventable illness and injury.
- Ask about the child-to-teacher ratio, which helps determine how much individual attention your child will get.

Evaluating a program based on these standards will help you choose a high-quality program for your child that will allow them to get a great start on learning.

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