

Infant and Toddler: Guide for Finding Child Care

NAME OF PROGRAM _____

Choosing child care for your baby and your family is one of the most important decisions you will make as a new parent. This guide provides a starting point with suggested questions to ask as well as things to look for as you visit centers. The resource staff of the Columbia University School and Child Care Search Service is available to discuss any issues and questions that arise during the child care search process. Please be in touch with us at any point throughout your search.

All early care and education programs must be licensed by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Up to date licensure status can be found on:

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/dc/dc.shtml>

WHAT TO ASK:

COMMENTS:

How do you manage the range of ages and developmental stages in one classroom?	
Will my baby be held a lot and have lots of conversation and physical nurturing? How is that managed? What happens when my baby cries?	
How will I know what my child's schedule for the day has been (feeding, sleeping and diapering)?	
How will I know what my child and his/her group has done each day (go outside each day, get tummy time each day)? Will I get a daily update?	
How is information communicated with parents?	
Can I bring my own breast milk?	
What procedures are in place to prevent the spread of germs and illnesses?	
What kind of experience and training will the caregivers in the baby room have? How do I know they will be loving, knowledgeable and caring people? How long have the caregivers been at the center? How long do most stay?	
Is the program accredited by or met the standards of the National Association for the Education of Young Children or other early care and education associations?	

WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

Health and Hygiene	Comments
Room sounds and smells pleasant	
Gloves worn during diaper changing and supplies labeled for each child.	
Teachers are CPR/first aid certified	
All formula and milk labeled	
Center has a secure entrance	

Caregivers and Staff:	Comments
Children have one primary caregiver	
Caregivers seem happy and engaged with the children	
The Center feels comfortable when you walk in (reception by staff, interactions between parents and staff)	
All families and visitors are greeted	

Children	Comments
Children seem happy and comfortable in the classroom	

Materials	Comments
There is a variety of materials and toys including those made of various materials and fabrics, natural and everyday home materials	
Furniture is child sized and designed specially for children of all developmental abilities and needs	
There is evidence of reading to infants and toddlers	
There are displays of what the children are doing and learning	