



Choosing Child Care

Five Steps to Finding the Right Program for Your Child

1 Explore: Understand the options. Two basic types of early care and education programs are available:

- Family Child Care - offers a small group setting within the provider's home.
- Child Care Center - offers group care in a large or small group setting.

2 Evaluate: Consider your preferences. For example, think about the individual learning style of your child (does he prefer small groups or large groups), your family needs, the location and the hours of care.

3 Observe: Visit at least three programs before making your final decision. Interview prospective providers, and talk to everyone who will be involved in your child's care. Plan to spend at least 30 to 60 minutes at each interview. Ask about lesson plans, fee schedules, discipline, meal service and contracts, as well as references of other families whose children have attended the program. You may want to take your child with you to see if the program is a good fit for him or her. Pay attention to any uneasy feelings you may have.

4 Decide: Trust your instincts. Keep in mind that the highest cost does not always guarantee the best program for your child and the least expensive rate does not necessarily mean a poor program. You also have the right and responsibility to ask for licensing information about a program. If you have questions about child care business practices, call us at 913-573-2273.

5 Follow Up: You have the right to visit your child's program whenever your child is there. Making regular visits is one way to monitor the quality of care your child is receiving. If you have serious concerns about the health and safety of the program, contact the local child care licensing department immediately. Remember, you have the final responsibility for your child's care and the right to change providers whenever you are concerned about your child's well-being or happiness.