

FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS WITH CHILD CARE PROVIDERS AND PROGRAMS: WHAT TO LOOK FOR AND ASK ABOUT

	SITE 1	SITE 2	SITE 3	WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN QUALITY CHILD CARE
HEALTH AND SAFETY				
What are your emergency procedures? Are they posted? Do you have practice evacuation drills? How would I be notified in case of an emergency?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety are a priority. Toys are inspected for safety on a regular basis. • Evacuation procedures are posted. Fire extinguishers visible. • Infants’ needs are met as needed, not on an imposed time schedule. • Routine hand washing using soap and water by adults, children and infants. • Proper handling of food, bottles of formula and breast milk. • Toys and equipment cleaned and sanitized with bleach/water solution. • Toys that are mouthed are sanitized daily. • Diapers are changed on a washable surface close to a sink for hand washing, but away from food and bottle preparation.
Are children taken off the premises? How and when would I be notified? How are children transported?				
What is your policy for administering medication?				
Are hands always washed before eating and after diapering? (Do you see hands being washed?)				
Where and how frequently will my baby’s diapers be changed?				
What precautions are taken to reduce the spread of illness? What do you use to sanitize?				
SPACE AND THE ENVIRONMENT				
Based on your observation, is the space clean, safe and comfortable?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children have enough space to work on projects and participate in activities. • Child-size furniture is used. • Infants are not confined to car seats, infant swings or bouncy seats. • Children and infants are monitored regularly while napping. • Children and infants are never left unsupervised indoors or outdoors. Providers are able to see what children are doing at all times. • Providers plan a range of indoor and outdoor activities.
Where will the children sleep, play and eat? Are babies always put to sleep on their back on a firm, flat surface in a crib or playpen?				
How are children supervised at all times?				
How often are children taken outdoors?				
ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS				
Describe a typical day in your program. What activities are children involved in?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play materials are age-appropriate and are interesting and challenging without being frustrating. • Children are allowed to make choices about what they want to do in their daily activities. This encourages a child’s independence and responsibility. • Activities are varied to focus on large motor (running, jumping, riding trikes) and fine motor development (drawing, writing, putting puzzles together). • A variety of books is available for all children to use on their own. Children are also read to daily, either individually or in groups. • Providers ask open-ended questions, encouraging a child’s language development and extended learning. • Providers limit TV viewing. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no TV viewing for children under two years of age; for older children, no more than 1-2 hours per day of educational and non-violent programming.
Are there areas for quiet play as well as active play?				
Are items displayed at the child’s level so the child can easily choose toys and materials to play with? How do you decide which toys are appropriate?				
Can children bring a special item from home, such as a toy or blanket?				
How often do you read with the children?				
Tell me how you plan activities to promote my child’s development.				
How much screen time (TV, computer, video games) is typical?				
INTERACTIONS				
Observe how the caregiver responds to the children.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider is warm and caring for all children in his or her charge. • The provider is patient and gives children time to adjust from one activity to the next. • The provider is clear and consistent and allows children to be involved setting fair rules and limits. • A variety of guidance techniques are used, such as sticking to a daily routine or schedule, redirection and positive reinforcement. • The provider never uses physical, mental or verbal punishment, such as hitting, shaming and belittling.
What is your policy on guidance and discipline?				
What are the rules and how do the children know them?				
How do you settle disputes?				
What are your feelings on wetting, thumb-sucking, pacifiers, finishing meals, biting, etc?				
Ask “What if…” questions. (What if my child hits you? What if my child bites another child? What if my child won’t take his nap?)				
TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE				
Tell me about your experiences caring for children. Do you have a philosophy on child-rearing?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providers are eager to learn about child development through books, professional journals and training. Research indicates that the more child development training a caregiver has the better care your child is likely to receive. • Provider training should cover a variety of topics such as how children grow, learn and form relationships. • Providers often display training certificates for parents to see.
How many hours of training have you had? Get specific information on the caregivers who will be with your child.				
Tell me what you’ve learned in recent workshops. How will you keep me updated on your training?				
How long do you anticipate providing child care?				
SECURITY				
Can I drop in any time unannounced?				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents should feel welcome at the child care program. • Parents should feel comfortable with all of the adults who will be in contact with your child. • Positive references. • Unannounced visits to the program are welcome.
Who are all the people who would be around my child? Are they screened? May I meet them?				
Is your license posted? Would I be informed if you were out of compliance?				
Can you provide me with contact information for references?				
After the interview, contact the county social services to find out if the provider has been in compliance with the rules.				
PROGRAM MANAGEMENT				
Please explain your written policies and contract.				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication with the provider is open and comfortable. • Time is made available at the beginning and end of each day for the parent and provider to communicate. • Providers use daily communication forms to inform parents of their child’s routines, moods and activities.
How will we build effective communication? How would we settle disputes?				
How would any disputes between us be settled?				
Are parents encouraged to become involved with the program? How?				