



C h i l d C a r e C h e c k l i s t

When shopping around for child care settings you might want to use the following checklist to assist you in making an informed decision. Try to spend at least 30 minutes at each child care facility to learn more about the place. Remember, to check the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) website: www.myflorida.com/childcare/provider, to find out if that center has had any violations and, if so, what they were. If you still have questions after reviewing the provider's information on the web, call DCF at 407-228-6062.

What to look for in caregivers/teachers	Provider One	Provider Two	Provider Three
Do the caregivers/teachers seem to really like children?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Do the caregivers/teachers appear warm, kind, calm and patient?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Do the caregivers/teachers speak, listen and play with the children at eye level?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are children greeted warmly when they arrive?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are children's needs quickly met when things get busy?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Do the caregivers/teachers give individual attention to each child? Do they see your child and every child as a unique and special individual?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What to look for in the facilities	Provider One	Provider Two	Provider Three
Is the place clean and neat? Does it smell clean?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the place bright and pleasant?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the facility safe, secure and physically accessible (ramps, outside play area, bathroom)?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there a fenced-in outdoor play area that is well equipped, safe and clean?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the play area supervised at all times?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there different areas for different child activities such as: resting, quiet/active play?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there enough space for the children in activity areas?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

What to ask during your visit regarding facility and caregivers/teachers	Provider One	Provider Two	Provider Three
Is the program licensed? Accredited?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are references and background checks done on staff?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the provider have good staff retention rate?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are the caregivers/teachers trained in early childhood education, CPR, and first aid?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are the children per adult ratio small? (Smaller group size is a quality indicator).	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the provider have policies and procedures when dropping off and picking up children?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the provider have policies and procedures to ensure that all children are present and accounted for during outdoor play, field trips, etc?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the caregiver have written policies and procedures, including emergency plans, vacations and substitutes?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the provider have written information/policies to give out to parents regarding: educational philosophy; the professional experience of staff and on-going staff education/training?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the provider have written information/policies regarding: child discipline; how parents are informed of illness; behavior issues, eating, napping, toileting habits, exposure to contagious illness, ext.?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What to look for in child activities	Provider One	Provider Two	Provider Three
Do the children look happy, involved in activities and well-cared for?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is there a daily balance of play time, story time, activity time and quiet time?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are well-planned activities such as music, painting and dress-up play provided for children?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are the activities right for each age group?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are the toys clean, safe and within reach of the children?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No

Is hand washing and diaper changing done frequently?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
What to ask during your visit regarding your rights and responsibilities as a parent/guardian	Provider One	Provider Two	Provider Three
Does the rate fit your family's financial means?	Yes No Rate: \$ _____	Yes No Rate: \$ _____	Yes No Rate: \$ _____
Are there additional fees for registration, materials; special activities such as art, music and field trips; food/snacks?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Are there scholarships available? Do child care personnel provide referrals to scholarship or subsidize programs if available?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
If you change your mind after enrolling your child would you be allowed to get your pre-registration fee back?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Does the caregiver welcome parent visits any time of the day and encourage parent involvement?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Questions to ask yourself	Provider One	Provider Two	Provider Three
Is the location convenient for you, close to home or on the way to work?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the schedule of operation convenient for your family?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Is the rate affordable?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Can you trust this provider with your child? Would you feel at ease leaving your child with this provider?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
Will your child be happy in this program?	Yes No	Yes No	Yes No
A Good Choice			
Does the caregiver and facility satisfy the greatest number of your priorities at a rate you can afford?	Rate: \$ _____ Total # of Yes: _____ Total # of No: _____	Rate: \$ _____ Total # of Yes: _____ Total # of No: _____	Rate: \$ _____ Total # of Yes: _____ Total # of No: _____

Source:

"Evaluating a Child Care Provider." Childcare Aware. <http://www.childcareaware.org>
"Quality Checklist." A Checklist for Evaluating Early Care and Education Programs. Children's Forum and Office of Early Learning www.thechildrensforum.com www.floridajobs.org/earlylearning.html
"It's a Win-win Situation: when parents and providers work together. The Daily Parent: A Newsletter for Working Parents. The Nation's Network of Child Care Resources and Referrals, 2004.