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WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK WHEN CALLING A CHILD CARE CENTER?

When you contact a child care center be sure to ask who it is that you are talking to, and what that person's role or job at the child care center is. It might be helpful to begin your conversation by saying "I am looking for child care, can you answer some questions for me?"

1. "Do you have an opening for my child, _____ age?"
2. "How many children are in your center?"
3. "How many teachers are in each classroom or group, and what training do they have?"
4. "How many children are in each classroom or group?"
5. "How many different adults will be with my child during the day?"
6. "Can you describe a typical day in your center?"
7. "How will I know how my child is doing in your child care center?"
8. "Do you serve meals to the children? "What types of foods are usually served?"
9. "What is your illness policy?"
10. "What are your fees and how often do I need to pay that?"
11. "Are there any registration fees or extra charges?"
12. "How is discipline handled in your child care center?"
13. "What would happen if someone other than the child's parent comes to pick him /her up?"
14. "If I decide that my child isn't going to attend your center anymore, how soon do I need to let the center know?"
15. "What do I need to do to start my child in your center?"
16. "What else can you tell me about your child care center?"
17. "When can I come for a visit?"

NOTE: Always visit the childcare center before enrolling your child!



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WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK A FAMILY CHILD CARE PROVIDER?

1. "Do you have an opening for my child, age?"
2. What days and hours of the week do you offer child care?"
3. "What are the ages of the children currently in your care?"
4. "Are you a regulated family child caring provider (Provisionally Certified, Certified or State Licensed)?"
5. "How long have you worked with children and what training do you have?"
6. "What is a typical day like in your child care?"
7. "Do you smoke or does anyone in your home smoke?"
8. "Are there other adults who visit your home regularly and that might have contact with my child?"
9. "Are there any pets in your home? What kind?"
10. "Do you serve meals to the children? What type of foods is usually served?"
11. "How do you handle discipline in your child care home?"
12. "Do the children watch TV? If so how long and which shows?"
13. "What is your illness policy"?
14. "Do you ever go on errands while the children are with you? If so, who watches the children while you are away?"
15. "Will my child play outside part of the day?"
16. "Do you take the children on trips or outings? What type of transportation do you use?"
17. "What are your fees and how often do I need to pay that amount?"
18. "Are there any registration fees or extra charges?"
19. "May I visit my child at any time?"
20. "What do I need to do to start my child in your child care?"
21. "When can I come for a visit?"



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WHAT QUESTIONS SHOULD I ASK WHEN I VISIT A CHILD CARE PROVIDER?

Birth to 12 months

- Do you think the baby should be picked up when he/she cries?
- What do you think a baby needs most?
- How often do you talk to the babies?
- How will I know when my child ate, slept or had a diaper change?
- How much time do babies spend in cribs or playpens?
- What do I need to bring for my baby?
- Do you hold the babies when you feed them?
- What activities do you do with babies?

1 –2 years

- If my child is being potty trained, how will you help him/her to learn?
- What do you do if a child has a temper tantrum?
- What activities do you do with the children daily?
- Do you take the children outside Where do you go?
- What toys do you have for toddlers?
- How will I know when my child ate, slept or had a diaper change?
- What should I bring for my child?

2-12 years (Preschool and school age)

- What indoor and outdoor activities do you plan?
- What do you do if a child misbehaves?
- What books do you read to the children?
- Do the children watch TV? How long and what shows?
- What toys do you have for preschool and school age children?
- What type of activities do you plan for preschool children?
- If two children are not getting along with one another, what do you do?

6-12 Years (School age)

- Do you offer before and after school child care?
- Do you give children a snack after school?
- Would you help my child do homework?
- If school is closed, can you care for my child all day?
- What activities might my child participate in if he/she is with you all day?
- On days that my child is with you all day, will you provide food?
- Do you provide transportation? How much does it cost?



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DEALING WITH PROBLEMS

When you and your provider disagree about something it will be best for everyone, especially your child, if you work out the problem before it gets bigger. Your child will be happiest when you and his/her childcare provider are getting along and agree with one another.

What can I do about problems?

- Talk with your childcare provider and clear the air as soon as possible.
- Never talk about the problem in front of the children, or when you or the child care provider are angry.
- Think about what you want to say in advance and then be very clear about what the problem is.
- Let the provider know what you want and listen to the provider's side of the story.
- Work out a solution that works for both you and the provider and then stick with your decision.
- Make sure that you tell the provider how you feel, but don't try to tell him/her how to feel.
- Set up a time to talk about the problem again in a few days or a week. At that time you can talk about whether the situation is getting better or worse.
- Do your best to work out the small problems with the child care provider. If you have tried repeatedly to work out a problem with your provider but don't seem to be getting anywhere, it may then be necessary to find a different childcare provider.

Note: If a problem you are having with your childcare provider involves harm to your child to threaten his/hers safety, remove your child from the childcare immediately and file a complaint.