

## CHOOSING A QUALITY CHILD CARE PROGRAM

Finding, screening and choosing a child care provider can be a difficult decision for parents; therefore it is important to carefully evaluate the program before you decide. Use the following guide while visiting and evaluating child care programs. (You should be able to answer "yes" to every question!)

<b>The Program's Health and Safety:</b>	
♥ Does the program have working smoke detectors and fire extinguishers?	♥
♥ Does the program have an emergency/evacuation plan and conduct practice drills with children?	♥
♥ Does the program childproof the area (i.e., electrical outlets covered, stairways protected, poisons and other dangerous items kept away from the children)?	♥
♥ Does the program have a working phone? Are emergency numbers posted?	♥
♥ Is the furniture and equipment secure and in good condition?	♥
♥ Does the program have first aid supplies in good condition?	♥
♥ Is the environment clean? (especially eating, diapering and bathroom areas)	♥
♥ Does the program support good health habits such as washing hands before eating/after toileting/after outside play?	♥
♥ Does the program have a policy to sleep infants in their back?	♥
♥ Does the program have a firm sleep surface for infants without toys, pillows and loose bedding?	♥
♥ Is the program certified to give medication to children? (As of January 31, 2005, all regulated child care programs need to be certified by NYS Office of Children and Family Services to administer medication to the children in their care, before getting parental permission to do so.)	♥
<b>The Program's Environment:</b>	
♥ Does the program have a safe place for infants to crawl and explore?	♥
♥ Does the program have space indoors and out for active play?	♥
♥ Does the program have a space for quiet times (homework, naptime, etc.)?	♥
♥	♥

♥ Does the program have enough equipment and supplies to meet the needs of various ages (blocks, books, games, toys, art materials)?	
♥ Does the program allow children to choose activities based on their own interests/abilities?	♥
♥ Does the program have space that is clean, bright, warm and comfortable?	♥
♥ Does the program have a bathroom accessible for the children?	♥
<b>The Child Care Professional:</b>	
♥ Are there enough adults for the group size of the children?	♥
♥ Does the caregiver attend trainings related to different areas of child development, nutrition, health and safety, etc?	♥
♥ Does the caregiver provide individual attention?	♥
♥ Does the caregiver help the children to feel good about themselves?	♥
♥ Does the caregiver appear to be warm, loving and nurturing?	♥
<b>The Program's Policies and Procedures:</b>	
♥ Were policies regarding illness, fees, discipline, hours and days off, etc. explained?	♥
♥ Is there a written contract or handbook that explains policies?	♥
♥ Were child rearing issues (feeding schedules, toileting, etc.) discussed?	♥
♥ Are nutritious meals provided?	♥
♥ Are the children transported for any reason—if so, does the caregiver make sure the children are properly secured in the vehicle?	♥
♥ Are parents allowed to visit at any time?	♥
♥ Are references provided?	♥
♥ Will the program share information regarding your child with you on a regular basis?	♥
♥ As a parent, you can claim the amount you pay for child care. Is the program willing to provide you with the information you need to submit the claim?	♥

### The Child Care Council of Cornell Cooperative Extension

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*The Mid-York Child Care Coordinating Council, Inc. does not recommend or endorse any child care program. Because selecting child care is a parent's responsibility, we urge you to check references, interview providers and visit as many sites as possible to compare programs to your family's needs.*

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