



Uniting Parents &  
Child Care



Parents, when choosing  
child care for your  
infant or toddler ask about...



### Continuity of Care and Primary Caregiving:

- Is there a primary caregiver for my child?
- How many different people will care for your child during the course of the day or week? Have you met all of them?
- Is there a system that supports and guides children and parents into the program and into new classrooms?

### Responsive Caregiving:

- Are children's needs quickly met even when things get busy?
- Are caregivers respectful of children and parents?
- Are children comforted when needed?
- Do caregivers talk, describe, and read aloud to children in a calm and relaxed voice?
- Do caregivers attempt to understand what children are trying say through out the day? (What does cooing, babbling, mean?)
- Do caregivers take time to talk with children during diapering, feeding, etc? Are the caregiving tasks used as an opportunity to learn?
- Do you see great "conversations" between babies and caregivers?
- Does each child receive some individual attention during the day?
- Is this caregiver able to assist with the special needs and interests of my child?
- Are naptimes determined by the child's needs?
- Are infants always fed in an upright position and held by an adult?
- Do infants spend most of their time in the arms of caregivers and on the floor exploring? Chairs, exersaucers, swings and cribs are used minimally.

### Responsive Environments:

- Does the daily schedule meet the needs of the children in care?
- Are breakfast, lunch, and snack times relaxed and pleasant? Do caregivers sit and talk with children and use meal times to encourage learning?
- Are there times and places for resting and to play quietly and actively?
- Are there times and places to play alone or with others in small groups (no more than 4 to a group)?
- Are there enough toys and learning materials for the number of children in care?
- Are children engaged in activities that are fun and diverse?
- Do you see evidence of reading to infants and toddlers?
- Are the children encouraged to explore the environment both in the class room and outdoors?
- Are the children allowed to choose between individual and small group activities?
- Are infants and toddlers allowed to go outside daily?
- Do you see natural and everyday home materials for children to explore, not just plastic toys?

### Competent Staff Trained in Early Childhood Development:

- Are all child care providers, volunteers, and substitutes trained on safe sleep practices to reduce the risk of SIDS?
- What training do caregivers have in infant/toddler development?
- Have caregivers received training on understanding and meeting the needs of children 0-3 years old?
- Are caregivers involved in continuing education programs related to the care of infants and toddlers?
- Are caregivers able to access educational and community resources, such as journals and books about infants and toddlers?

For more information on quality child care standards for infants and toddlers contact:

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Bredekamp, S. & Copple, C. (eds.) (1997) *Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Programs*. Washington, DC: NAEYC.

Lally, J.R., Griffin, A. Fenichel, E. Segal, M. Szanton, E. & Weissbourd, B. (1995) *Caring for Infants & Toddlers in Groups: Developmentally Appropriate Practice*. Washington D.C.: Zero to Three.

Harms, T., Cryer, D., & Clifford, R. (2003) *Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition*. New York: Teachers College Press.