



Choosing Child Care: A Checklist for Quality

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	✓	NOTES
Is the atmosphere pleasant? Is the environment clean? How do you feel walking into the facility?		
Is the program licensed?		
Is the program accredited by a national or state agency? If not, is the program participating in VQB5?		
What additional fees does the program charge? (Absences, vacations, activities, etc.)		
Does the program welcome parents to visit anytime throughout the day?		
What is the policy regarding pick up and drop off? (Can you drop off at any time or during specific hours? Who is allowed to pick up your child? What is the screening process?)		
How will you be notified of what is happening each day? (Is there an app? Daily sheets? Video monitoring?)		
What is the behavior policy and how do they address misbehavior?		
How much time is designated for outdoor play?		
PROGRAM SAFETY	✓	NOTES
Are all entrances and exits locked and secured? (Do you enter with a key/keycode? Are you visually screened and buzzed in?)		
Are there any guns or weapons on the property? If so, are they locked and secured?		
Are the outdoor play areas safe and secure? (ex: fenced in play areas, gated pool, playground free of hazards or safety concerns)		
Is everything childproofed by age-appropriate standards? (ex: outlet covers, safety buckles on chairs, cleaning products locked away and out of reach)		
What is the policy regarding medication administration, illness, or injury?		
SUPERVISION AND STAFF QUALIFICATIONS	✓	NOTES
Have all staff undergone comprehensive background checks?		
How many staff are trained in First Aid and CPR? (Is your child's potential teacher certified?)		
Is your child's teacher trained in age-specific child development?		
Does the provider participate in ongoing training or continuing education?		
How many staff have been employed for over one year? (How long has your child's potential provider been there?)		
How many children are in the classroom, group, or home? How many adults? Is the provider following state ratio or point guidelines?		
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	✓	NOTES
Does the program have a plan in place in case of emergency or disaster? (ex: fire, tornado, flood, or active shooter/intruder plans)		
How often are emergency drills practiced?		
How will the provider communicate with you in the event of an emergency?		
Is the provider trained in Trauma-Informed Care?		

THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS	✓	NOTES
Is there a place where mothers can comfortably breastfeed their child?		
Is the area where diapers are changed clean? How often is it sanitized?		
What is the nap routine? Are there safe sleep practices in place? (ex: sleeping on backs only, sleeping in cribs only, no blankets in cribs, no sleeping in car seats)		
How are children grouped? (Are crawlers and walkers separated? Do children bond with one primary caregiver?)		
Are children supervised at all times , even when they are sleeping?		
What is the policy regarding infant containers? (If bouncers, walkers, and chairs are allowed, is there a limit? Ensure these items are not used for napping.)		
THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR PRESCHOOLERS	✓	NOTES
What curriculum does the program follow?		
Is there a balance of active and quiet activities throughout the day? Are experiences planned for all areas of development? (ex: blocks, dramatic play, art, science, books/early literacy?)		
What is the policy regarding meals and snacks? (Who provides food? If provided, are they healthy and nutritious? Is water always available both indoors and outdoors? Are fresh fruit and vegetables served?)		
Do children go on field trips? How are you notified of upcoming trips?		
Notice the teacher/child interactions and ensure they are positive. (Are children greeted with a smile? Does the teacher get down on the child's level to talk?)		
THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR SCHOOL-AGERS	✓	NOTES
Is transportation available to and from your child's school?		
Is the program open during school closures? (ex: teacher work days, holidays, breaks, summer, inclement weather, etc.)		
What is the policy regarding meals and snacks? (Who provides food? If provided, are they healthy and nutritious? Is water always available both indoors and outdoors? Are fresh fruit and vegetables served?)		
How does the program handle homework time?		
How does your school-ager feel about the program? Let them weigh in!		
THINGS TO CONSIDER FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS	✓	NOTES
How does the program handle food allergies or dietary restrictions?		
Does the staff/caregiver have the appropriate training and experience to care for your child's needs?		
Is the program willing to work with specialists to plan an appropriate program for your child? Does the program allow outside specialists to offer services on-site if needed?		
How will your child's teacher/caregiver explain your child's special needs to the other children in the group?		
If you need transportation, are they able to accommodate?		
Is the program certified to administer medication, if needed?		
IF THE TOUR GOES WELL	✓	NOTES
Ask for references of families who have used the program.		
Ask for a copy of the parent handbook. (Be sure to understand anything you sign and get a copy.)		
Review inspection records on the VA Dept. of Social Services Website at www.dss.virginia.gov/facility/search/cc.cgi or by calling (800) 543-7545.		

Child Care Centers			Family Day Homes		
Adult	Child	Age	Points	Age	
1	4	Birth-16 months	4	Birth-16 months	
1	5	16 months-2 years	3	16 months-2 years	
1	8	2-3 years	2	2-4 years	
1	10	3-4 years	1	5-9 years	
1	18	5+ years	0	10+ years	

Maximum of 16 points per caregiver