

This section was developed from a brochure published by City of Davis Child Care Services. For additional information, please visit [National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies](#)

1. Call those programs that interest you and screen potential providers about price, location, ages accommodated, days available, & activities offered. If the program fits your needs, arrange a visit to the facility and use the guide below to observe and question potential caregivers. Identify at least three different programs; even if the first program seems perfect, check others for comparison.
2. Familiarize yourself with the following guide and use it as a resource when visiting child care programs.

The Caregiver

- What is the education, experience, & background of the caregiver?
- Does the caregiver attend professional continuing training?
- Do expectations vary for children of different ages & interests?
- Observe interaction between providers and children. Are both children & staff happy and attentive?
- Do children get individual attention?
- Does the caregiver interact positively with children? Does s/he communicate on their level?
- Does the caregiver actively listen to the children & respond accordingly?
- Does the caregiver stress children's strengths and accomplishments?
- Does the caregiver display humor and common sense?
- Does the caregiver's philosophy of childcare mirror yours?
- Is the caregiver a person with whom you feel you can share concerns about your child?
- Is the caregiver able to resolve conflicts between children?

Child Interactions

- Do the children seem comfortable and happy?
- Are children free to express themselves?
- Do the children trust the caregiver for comfort, help, and assistance?
- Does the caregiver help children learn consideration while asserting themselves?

Daily Activities

- Is a set schedule established for the children?
- How is rest time handled?
- What activities are planned for the children? Are they age appropriate?
- What is the emphasis of activities - learning, creative play, or both?
- Are activities balanced between physical play and indoor activities?
- Are children allowed to select activities of interest to them?
- Does the caregiver recognize the value of play and encourage creativity?
- Are a variety of constructive toys available in adequate supply?
- Do play tools reflect our multicultural society without stereotyping?

Discipline

- How are children disciplined?
- Is reasonable discipline maintained with an emphasis on teaching appropriate behavior?
- Is 'time out' utilized as an opportunity for introspection versus punishment?
- Are children allowed to exercise decision-making and problem-solving?

Adult-Child Ratios

- What ratios are allowable under the caregiver's license?
- How many other children will be cared for, and what are their ages?
- Are there enough adults to provide adequate attention to all children?

Environment

- Is there enough space for all children to move about freely?
- Are there spaces for children to work or play both quietly and actively?
- Are rooms comfortable, inviting, interesting, & cheerful?
- Is children's work displayed where they can see and take pride in accomplishments?

Meals & Snacks

- Are nutritious, varied meals & snacks provided at appropriate times? Ask to see a current weekly menu.
- Can the caregiver accommodate special dietary needs?
- If you provide food for your child, how will the food be stored and prepared?

Special Accommodations

- Is the caregiver able to accommodate special needs?

Parent Participation

- Is parent participation encouraged or required?
- Are parents welcome to attend or observe during regular hours?

Safety

- Is lighting, heat, and ventilation adequate?
- Is equipment safe and in good repair?
- Are medicines and other dangerous materials secured and out of reach?
- Are fire safety devices maintained and installed appropriately?
- Is an emergency evacuation plan established and practiced regularly?
- Is emergency information kept on file for each child? How will you be contacted?

Illnesses

- What arrangements are available for sick children?
- Is a qualified assistant available in case of caregiver illness or emergency?